

THE SPECTATOR

Cornered

What will Putin do now, asks Paul Wood

MY NIGHT WITH
THE NUNS
JEREMY CLARKE

IN DEFENCE OF
KEIR STARMER
ROD LIDDLE

TRUST IN
TRUSSONOMICS
JULIAN JESSOP

CANADA: A 25 EURO ZONE €7.75
SOUTH AFRICA ZAR105.00

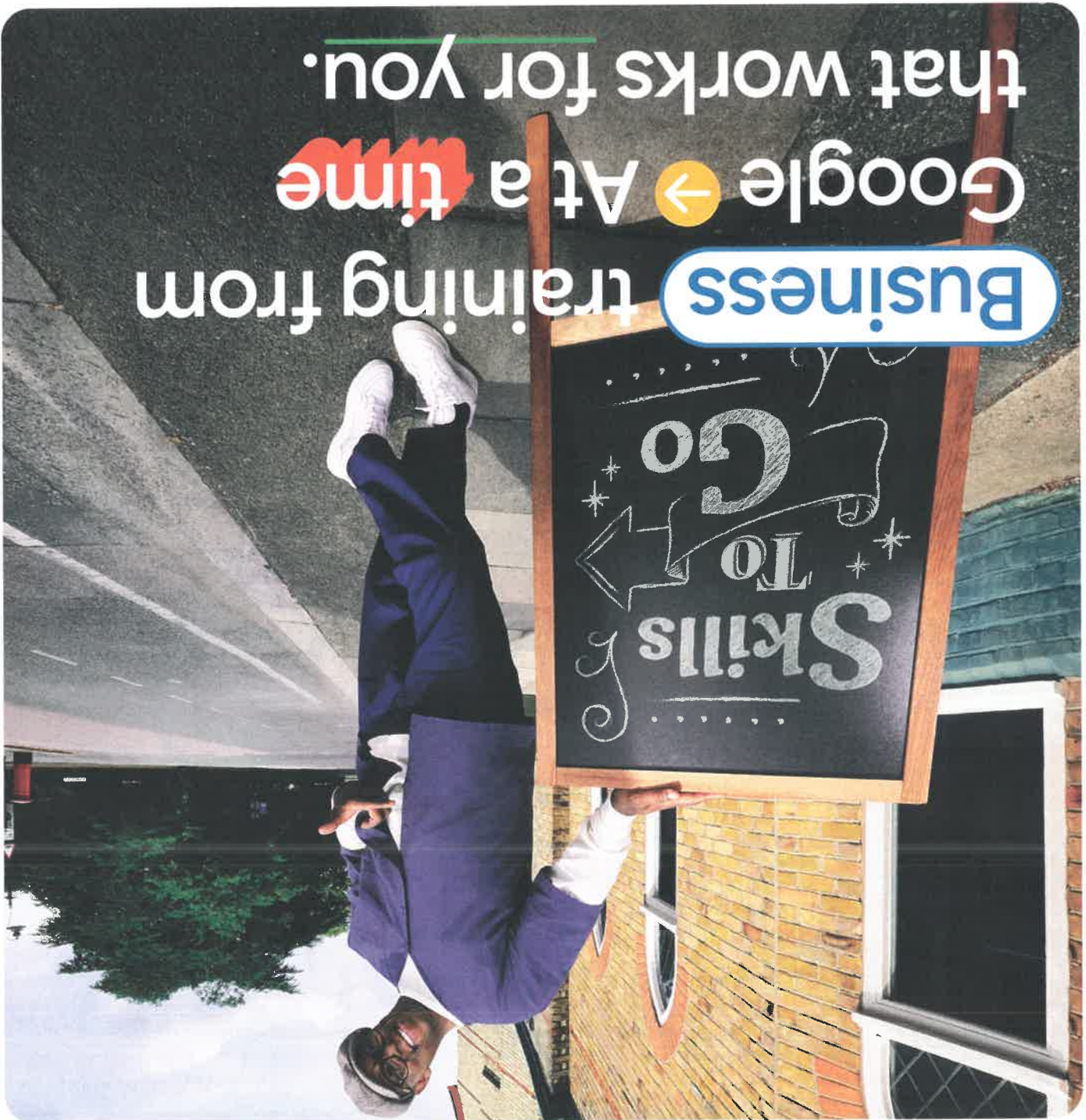


Business training from Google → At a time that works for you.

79% of British small business owners said digital skills were essential or important to the day-to-day running of their business.* To help, Google provides free training to people across the UK, from self-guided online courses to one-to-one mentoring – at a time that works for you.

Your lunch break, for example.

Search 'Google skills training' to find out more



In search of Trussonomics

When Liz Truss entered the leadership race there was no such thing as 'Trussonomics'. She began her campaign with no real expectation of winning and without any serious guiding philosophy. Rishi Sunak did her a great service by portraying her throughout the leadership campaign as a crazed tax-cutter, a disciple of Ronald Reagan. But in truth, her economic policy was nowhere near as coherent as Sunak made out.

Truss just about scraped through the soundbite war of the debates, but the fact is she had no real pro-growth, tax-cutting agenda. All she pledged to do during her campaign was to freeze forthcoming corporation tax rises and shave 1 per cent off National Insurance. This she did mainly because the 2019 Tory manifesto promised not to raise tax. Reneging on manifesto pledges damages trust in politics, Truss argued. But this is a tiny tax cut and unlikely to inspire any sort of economic growth.

Kwasi Kwarteng, the Chancellor, talks about a plan to return Britain to 2.5 per cent growth, and he's right to say that 'supply-side reform' is the remedy, but there will need to be a lot more of it to have any hope of producing the sort of growth he has in mind. And it would need to come in many forms. One of the reasons the economy is being held back is that five million people – a scandalous 13 per cent of the potential labour force – are on out-of-work benefits. The government has yet to admit to this figure, let alone come up with a plan to use these people's talents to better effect. In an economy with 1.3 million vacancies – twice the average of the past decade – there has never been a better time to help the unemployed into work. The first and most precious resource of any economy is its

potential workforce, whose talents in Britain today are scandalously underused. Some of the most motivated people in the country are banned from seeking work and forced to stay on benefits: these are the 96,000 waiting to have their asylum cases heard. Allowing them to support themselves and their families while the process is under way would help to grow the economy, provide relief to the taxpayer and give dignity to the asylum-seeker.

The Prime Minister is right to talk about overall principles: that high taxes make everyone poorer and that you cannot tax your way into growth. Government works best when it gets out of people's way and confuses less of what they earn. But this can only meaningfully happen if cuts are also made to state spending. Until this happens, any tax cuts will be temporary and any pro-growth policy illusory.

The most significant Trussonomics proposal so far is the gas price bailout. Julian Jessop, one of the economists whose work has been influential in the new government's thinking, explains on page 14 why he's optimistic that this won't run up the £150 billion price tag feared by the Institute for Fiscal Studies. Since this estimate was drawn up, the price of wholesale gas has halved. Still, on current estimates, the price cap – a classic example of borrow-and-splurge – will end up larger than any tax cut that is in the offing. Herbert Morrison famously declared that 'socialism is what a Labour government

Truss scraped through the soundbite war of the debates, but the fact is she had no real pro-growth agenda

does'. But Tory governments over recent years have borrowed and spent too, and to no good end. They've dismissed spending reform as 'austerity' and accepted that more government is the solution to every problem. Boris Johnson was just as bad, making ludicrous and unworkable proposals for the country to reach net zero and subsidising care-home costs for wealthier pensioners. Every prime minister or chancellor ends up with a reputation for his or her particular economic policy, whether deserved or not. Osbornomics meant doing the right thing and cutting taxes after wasted years of terrified inaction. Johnsonomics was defined by 'cakeism': borrow, spend, never say no. The pandemic was a disaster for every country, but Johnson's response – the extent and length of the lockdowns – left a bill greater than that facing other economies.

Trussonomics should mean repairing that damage. It should mean acknowledging the labour market (especially amongst the over-fifties) and that more needs to be done to coax people back to work. Trussonomics should mean doing a better job of explaining unpopular policies. Every banker's bonus is now split 50/50 with the government, thanks to progressive tax rates. It would not hurt to make this point. Lifting the cap on bonuses should see extra tax collected from the super-rich and less money needed from others. As Truss pushes ahead with her own agenda, her government cannot forget the economic mess that still needs cleaning up. Truss must remember that big spending proposals require big trade-offs. She must make sure that her growth agenda is bold and ambitious enough to achieve the desired results. The country can't afford anything less.

THE WEEK

BOOKS & ARTS

Orc-in-chief, p12



Three's company, p25



'Are the royal pen-makers first for the chop, perchance? p50



3 **Leading article**
 6 **Portrait of the Week**
 9 **Diary** Zelensky is a hero of our time
 10 **Politics** Going for growth
 11 **The Spectator's Notes**
 12 **Cornered**

12 **Cornered**
 13 **'This war is a catastrophe'**
 14 **Truss's gamble**
 16 **The bulldog of Brazil**
 18 **Composer's notebook**
 22 **'Keir's not Superman, he can't do it all by himself'**
 26 **Benched**
 28 **Letters** The Queen we loved;
 30 **Any other business**

32 **Simon Heffer**
 34 **Jonathan Sumption**
 36 **Boyd Tonkin**
 37 **Lucasta Miller**
 39 **Ariane Bankes**
 40 **Francesca Peacock**

23 **Ancient and modern**
 25 **Mary Wakefield**
 28 **Letters** The Queen we loved;
 30 **Any other business**
 32 **Simon Heffer**
 34 **Jonathan Sumption**
 36 **Boyd Tonkin**
 37 **Lucasta Miller**
 39 **Ariane Bankes**
 40 **Francesca Peacock**

12 **Cornered**
 13 **'This war is a catastrophe'**
 14 **Truss's gamble**
 16 **The bulldog of Brazil**
 18 **Composer's notebook**
 22 **'Keir's not Superman, he can't do it all by himself'**
 26 **Benched**
 28 **Letters** The Queen we loved;
 30 **Any other business**
 32 **Simon Heffer**
 34 **Jonathan Sumption**
 36 **Boyd Tonkin**
 37 **Lucasta Miller**
 39 **Ariane Bankes**
 40 **Francesca Peacock**

12 **Cornered**
 13 **'This war is a catastrophe'**
 14 **Truss's gamble**
 16 **The bulldog of Brazil**
 18 **Composer's notebook**
 22 **'Keir's not Superman, he can't do it all by himself'**
 26 **Benched**
 28 **Letters** The Queen we loved;
 30 **Any other business**
 32 **Simon Heffer**
 34 **Jonathan Sumption**
 36 **Boyd Tonkin**
 37 **Lucasta Miller**
 39 **Ariane Bankes**
 40 **Francesca Peacock**

Cover by Morten Morland. Drawings by Michael Heath, Castro, John Broadley, Ian Tovey, Wilbur, Bernie, Nick Newnam, Royson, Grizelda, K.J. Lamb, Robert Thompson, Matt Percival. www.spectator.co.uk Editorial and advertising The Spectator, 22 Old Queen Street, London SW1H 9HP, Tel: 020 7961 0200, Email: letters@spectator.co.uk (for publication); advertising@spectator.co.uk (advertising); Advertising enquiries: 020 7961 0128 Subscriptions and delivery queries for a basic annual subscription in the UK: £111; Europe: £185; Australia: A\$279; New Zealand: A\$349; and £195 in all other countries. To order, go to www.spectator.co.uk or call 0330 3330 050 and quote A151A; Newsagent queries Spectator Circulation Dept, 22 Old Queen Street, London SW1H 9HP, Tel: 020 7961 0200, Fax: 020 7681 3773, Email: dbrwn@spectator.co.uk; Distributor Marketforce, 161 Marsh Wall, London, E14 9AP, Tel: 0203 787 9001. www.marketforce.co.uk Vol 350, no 10,126 © The Spectator (1828) Ltd. ISSN 0038-6952 The Spectator is published weekly by The Spectator (1828) Ltd at 22 Old Queen Street, London SW1H 9HP Editor: Fraser Nelson

Rupert Christiansen is the author of *Diaghilev's Empire: How the Ballets Russes Enthralled the World*. On p42 he explains why we should kill off the ENO and ENB.

Lucasta Miller is the author of *The Brontë Myth and Poems and One Epiaph*. She returns to the last days of Keats on p37.

Simon Heffer, who praises Vaughan Williams on p32, is author of a major biography of the composer and editor of *Henry 'Chips' Channon: The Diaries*.

Sir James MacMillan, who writes about the anthem he composed for the Queen's funeral on p18, is a Scottish composer and conductor.

Oliver Basciano, who looks at the possibility of a coup in Brazil on p16, is the editor-at-large of *ArtReview*.

CONTRIBUTORS

- 42 **Rupert Christiansen** The end is nigh for ENO and ENB
- 44 **Opera** Salome; La Princesse de Trébizonde Richard Bratby
- Television** Crossfire; Michael Palin: Into Iraq James Walton
- 45 **Exhibitions** Edward Lear Laura Gascoigne
- 47 **Theatre** Rose; The P Word Lloyd Evans
- Pop** A.A. Williams; Nathy Peluso Michael Hann
- 48 **Dance** Made in Leeds: Three Short Ballets; Giselle Rupert Christiansen
- 49 **Cinema** Catherine Called Birdy Deborah Ross

LIFE

GB pews, p26



See Naples and die, p37



Martyr complex, p11



There is a fringe debate at Labour conference on the future of the monarchy, featuring Polly Toynbee (yes, hurry, hurry, get your tickets now!) Rod Liddle, p15

There's enormous potential for jealousy in polyamory, everyone agrees, so each poly partner needs a lot of reassurance. Poly therapists recommend twice-weekly sessions. Mary Wakefield, p25

When I was a boy, a python swallowed a German hippie camping near a lake on the Tanzanian border. Aidan Hartley, p56

- 50 **Notes on...** Fountain pens James Innes-Smith
- 58 **Chess** Luke McShane
- Competition** Lucy Vickery
- 59 **Crossword** Doc
- 60 **No sacred cows** Toby Young
- Battle for Britain** Michael Heath
- 61 **Sport** Roger Alton
- Your problems solved** Mary Killen
- 62 **Food** Tanya Gold
- Mind your language** Dot Wordsworth

PORTRAIT OF THE WEEK



Home

Queen Elizabeth was buried in St George's Chapel, Windsor Castle, beside her husband and father, after a funeral at Westminster Abbey. In the ten days of mourning, six days were devoted to a lying-in-state at Westminster Hall, for which the public queued around the clock, often for more than five miles and ten hours. A livestream broadcast on television accustomed viewers to Gentlemen at Arms with swan-feather plumes and Yeomen of the Guard with ribboned hats guarding the catafalque. The public were courteous, silent and moved.

King Charles completed a tour to Edinburgh, Belfast and Cardiff during the days of mourning, making speeches, meeting crowds and speaking in Welsh. After the state funeral service at the Abbey he followed Queen Elizabeth's coffin, drawn on the state gun-carriage by 142 sailors, in a procession a mile and a quarter long to the Wellington Arch, accompanied by his sister, the Princess Royal, and his brothers, the Duke of York and Earl of Wessex, and followed by his sons, the Prince of Wales and the Duke of Sussex. Some in the crowd clapped the coffin, some threw flowers. At each minute of the 45-minute procession Big Ben tolled and a gun saluted. Trains to Paddington did not run on the day because of overhead cable faults. Foreign royalty attended. Xi Jinping, the ruler of China, was invited and sent Vice President Wang Qishan; Mohammed bin Salman, the ruler of Saudi Arabia, was

Abroad

asked but fortunately did not come. US President Joe Biden came but didn't have to travel on a bus with other heads of state. Businesses would benefit from a capping of energy prices for six months from 1 October under a big government subsidy scheme. Kwasi Kwarteng, the Chancellor of the Exchequer, prepared this week's 'fiscal event', starting with the abolition of the National Insurance tax rise and the lifting of a ban on bankers' bonuses. Liz Truss, the Prime Minister, flew to the UN General Assembly in New York, planning to talk to Mr Biden, but declared that no trade agreement would be struck with the US for many years. She pledged more help for Ukraine. Britain contemplated a new European Political Community, hatched by Emmanuel Macron. In England, the number of people testing positive for Covid fell to one in 75 by the first week in September (from one in 70 a week earlier) and in Scotland rose to one in 45 (from one in 50) according to the Office for National Statistics. Public disorder between Muslims and Hindus in Leicester led to 47 arrests.

President Vladimir Putin called up 300,000 reservists for his war against Ukraine. President Volodymyr Zelensky of Ukraine met soldiers in the recaptured city of Izium. Hundreds of bodies on the outskirts of the city were exhumed. Ukrainian forces claimed control of the Kharkiv region and retook a village in the

Luhansk region. Russia's Black Sea fleet relocated some of its submarines from their home port of Sevastopol in Crimea for fear of long-range strikes. Russia called snap plebiscites in occupied Ukrainian territory. The Duma rushed through a bill to punish desertion during times of general mobilisation. Mr Putin acknowledged after meeting Xi Jinping in Uzbekistan that China had 'questions and concerns' about Ukraine. Asked what he'd say to the use of tactical nuclear weapons by Mr Putin, Mr Biden said: 'Don't. Don't. Don't. You will change the face of war unlike anything since World War II.'

Asked if America would defend Taiwan from an attack by China, Mr Biden said: 'Yes, if in fact there was an unprecedented attack.' As China recorded its first case of monkeypox, the chief epidemiologist at the Chinese Center for Disease Control and Prevention told people not to have skin-to-skin contact with foreigners. Texas and Arizona sent 300 buses carrying 13,000 migrants to Democrat-controlled Washington DC, New York and Chicago; another Republican state, Florida, did the same thing. CSH

Let's talk about what
really moves you.



Whatever your property needs,
we go above and beyond to meet them.

Settle for more.

Knight Frank
Your partners
in property

Some things in life,
last more than a lifetime

To leave them a legacy they'll treasure as
fondly as their golden moments with you, visit
sharpspixley.com, call 020 7871 0532,
or alternatively come and see us at
54 St James's Street, London.

Treasured Forever.



DIARY



recently 'had a very strange phone call with your president'. (The explosive readout of Donald Trump's July call with Zelensky was released ten days later.) That night, by way of after-dinner cabaret, he appeared onstage with three other performers in his old comedy show. That jeune Zelensky has been entirely effaced by the war leader who on 24 February decided to stand and fight – 'I need ammunition, not a ride' – staking his life in what seemed to many a doomed last stand against the Russian imperial steamroller. In an age when the democratic world has grown accustomed

to phony leadership, it gives you a jolt to encounter the real thing. He is a hero of our time, perhaps the hero.

British historians are supposed to know about their monarchy. Having once embarked on a history of the House of Saxe-Coburg and Gotha – as the royal family was known before 1917 – I ought to have been a fount of wisdom. But that book was never completed. Despite many long hours in the Royal Archives at Windsor Castle, I moved to the United States nearly two decades ago and in 2018 I became a US citizen. Although we Britons are not obliged to relinquish our UK citizenship, I recall winning when required, during the naturalisation ceremony, 'absolutely and entirely [to] renounce and abjure all allegiance and fidelity to any foreign prince, potentate, state, or sovereignty'. The Queen was in my mind's eye as I said those words. I consoled myself that this was one of life's necessary white lies.

Yet dual citizenship is more

disreputable than a white lie. It is a hedge. When farcical things occur in Britain – such as the opera buffa premiership of Boris Johnson – I am an American. When the United States is being embarrasing – as during Trump's attempted autogolpe on 6 January – I switch. The Queen's death found me out. It was not the pagantry of the past ten days, magnificent though it was, nor even the Lone Piper's pibroch, so much as the recollection of her role in my family's history. My grandfather Thomas Hamilton was a Labour man when she ascended the throne. His wartime service in the RAF in Burma and India left him with roughly Orwell's views of the British Empire and establishment. Yet he always made us sit and watch the Queen's Christmas message and stood to attention when 'God Save the Queen' was played. I have maintained that tradition, so even his youngest grandchildren grasped the significance of her death. To have been part of a nation in mourning must have been uplifting, too.

Niall Ferguson is the Milbank Family Senior Fellow at the Hoover Institution, Stanford University and a Bloomberg Opinion columnist.

When the Queen died, I was on my way to Kyiv. My mind focused on the war in Ukraine, I found myself uncharacteristically lost for words when I was asked to comment. I took refuge in the complexities of the journey, which involved a delayed flight from Rome to Lublin, a frantic drive to Chelm on the Polish-Ukrainian border, and then an overnight train through western Ukraine. It was a good excuse. The reality was I could think of nothing to say. I couldn't have done an interview even if I'd been trapped in Broadcasting House.

Kyiv was, as NBC's roving war correspondent Richard Engel had forewarned me, more exuberant than you might expect a capital city at war to be. The Battle of Kyiv was fought and won in the first phase of the war and now the fighting is to the south, around Kherson, and to the east, beyond Kharkiv. Central Kyiv looks positively cheerful. Only when you drive north-east, to the suburbs of Irpin, Bucha and Hostomel, do you see the blown bridges, destroyed houses, and burnt-out Russian armour. I am haunted by the simple memorial to the victims of Russian war crimes buried next to the Church of St Andrew and Pervozavanozhko All Saints in Bucha. It was only six months ago that they interred the bodies of more than 60 people here, many of them civilians executed in cold blood by Russian death squads. Ukrainian soldiers routinely refer to the invaders as 'the orcs'. You soon see why.

There had been something thrilling about the train ride to Kyiv. Our group included old friends – Anne Applebaum, Radek Sikorski, Fareed Zakaria, Eric Schmidt – and there was a certain giddiness as we trundled eastwards in blacked-out sleeping compartments. Bucha jolted us out of that mood and prepared us for President Zelensky's sombre message that a 'winter of discontent' was fast approaching, not just for Ukraine but for all of Europe. I'd met Zelensky before, five months after his improbable election in April 2019. I liked him. 'Diminutive but energetic,' wrote, 'he radiates ingenuous bonhomie.' Over lunch, he confided that he had

SPECTATOR
THE
Subscribe for
only £1 an issue

- ✓ Weekly delivery of the magazine
- ✓ App access to the new issue from Thursday
- ✓ Full website access



0330 333 0050 quoting A868A
Introductory offer. Auto-renewing payments only.
\$1 a week in Australia call 089 362 4134 quoting TJ25A
or go to spectator.com.au/intro

THE SPECTATOR'S NOTES

Charles Moore



funeral, only one, David Cameron, would identify as a country mouse. The good news, however, is that the new King is equally a champion of rural life. Indeed, he supports it, from Turo to Transylvania, with an ardour which was foreign to his mother's character. Country people could have no stronger or higher-placed friend at court.

I have been studying Sir Arthur Penn's manuscript account of the death of George VI in 1952. The future Charles III, aged three, was at Sandringham with his parents once they had hurried back from Kenya, after hearing the news of her father's demise. The bearer party of Guards for the coffin were staying at York House on the estate to rehearse. The Prince, wearing a 'ruby-coloured velvet' outfit and a deerstalker, went, under Penn's care, to see them. The 'huge men' gathered and stood before the tiny boy. At his request, they put on their bearskins, greatcoats and belts, and presented their rifles. Satisfied, 'the inspecting officer withdrew with a low bow'. I wonder if, 70 years later, standing beside his mother's bearer party, the new King remembered this first encounter with death and succession.

Penn was private secretary to the new Queen's mother, Queen Elizabeth. When Elizabeth II and Prince Philip reached Sandringham, Penn 'bowed over her hand and kissed it for the first time', saying, 'God bless Your Majesty always.' 'Thank you, Arthur', she said, in that clear voice which I have known so well since she could only lisp with it. I felt strangely moved. Penn added that 'The Queen and even more, Prince Philip, are bursting with new ideas, as they should be.' He made it a rule 'to criticise nothing be a good rule to re-apply now, after almost three-quarters of a century.

Walking through Green Park earlier in the week, wearing my way through the bunches of flowers, I imagined myself as a visitor who had heard no news. Why, I might have asked myself, is everyone so upset about the death of a small bear with a red hat?

Westminster Hall well after night had fallen, and viewed the coffin. Behold, he tells me, the wonderful experience of grace cast out his fear. He is left with its rational aspects, but finds that what he calls 'the sense of irrational jeopardy' has gone. He quotes the line from the hymn, 'The prisoner leaps to loose his chains'.

When the word 'diversity' is used, it is often a code word for people in a predominantly white society who have black or brown skin, but the definition should surely go wider. The most important example of this in the Queen's funeral was the man who so beautifully organised its military aspects, Christopher Chika, Major-General commanding the Household Division. He is a Romanian prince and the great-grandson of the legendary Princess Marthe Bibesco. He is a British citizen because George VI gave shelter to his grandfather during the war, allowing him to keep his princely title. Gen. Chika does not use the title, but his gratitude to the King is expressed in this last service he performed for his elder daughter. His follows the classic pattern of so many immigration stories, if at an unusually rarefied level.

Much has been said about the late Queen's love of dogs and horses, less about the more general fact that she was a countrywoman. Almost everyone is either a town mouse or a country one, and she was the latter. This was always a source of comfort to rural people all over the nation, particularly in an age when hardly any powerful people have a close connection with the land. Of the six British prime ministers who attended the Queen's

If this were a Catholic country, up in St Peter's Square shouted 'Santo subito!' And the Polish Pope was indeed made a saint with unusual speed. What about St Elizabeth, with Windsor as her Compostela? Well, we are not a Catholic country, and if we were, Elizabeth II would never have become our Queen. She clearly did, however, possess the first of the two formal qualifications for sainthood, what the Church calls 'heroic virtue'. The second is to prove two miracles effected by intercession to the person concerned. This can take time, but the world is already full of people who believe the late Queen cured them of this or that. As her cult grows, plenty of posthumous examples will come forward. The Church of England, of which she was Supreme Governor, has an odd position on sainthood. It accepts pre-Reformation canonisations but has never tried to add to their number (with one important and controversial exception – King Charles the Martyr). If it were minded to do so, this is its best possible moment to start. Admittedly, the person in all the world least likely to have approved of such a proceeding would have been Elizabeth herself. But then, the sort of person who wants to be a saint is the sort who must not be made one.

I already know personality of one example where the Queen, after death, made a difference. My cousin, Tom Oliver, has long suffered from exceptional anxiety about catching illnesses. He worked hard, usually successfully, in managing this, and leads an active, fruitful life; but his worry was worsened by Covid, particularly because he is diabetic and because he was engaged in major commitments which would burden his wife if he died or was incapacitated. Until this week, Tom had had almost no direct human contact, except with immediate family, for more than 29 months. He decided, however, that he really should witness the lying-in-state. He travelled up among the crowds of thousands, for 15 hours, never sitting down. He reached

'This war is a catastrophe'

Meet Russia's new opposition

LISA HASELDINE

solidarity because of the intimidation they're facing," said Ksenia Thorstrom, another St Petersburg councillor who signed the petition. "We want to show we're not scared. But of course we are," Olga Fatmush, 57, a councillor for the Gavan municipal district in St Petersburg, was born in Ukraine and has family there. "How could I not sign this letter? The culprit for everything we are going through is Putin; he is the one who has done this. He has destroyed family ties. I am not the only one with this pain. There are thousands like me."

The petitioners fear Putin is turning the clock back on Russia's progress. A new iron curtain seems to be descending. "You can split life into before and after 24 February, anyone here will tell you that," says Timofei Nikolaev, another petitioner from Moscow, his voice faltering with emotion. "It's hard."

Censorship has returned, as has the re-emergence of thought crime. Anna Kisileva, another Smolinskoye councillor, says: "Everyone is waiting for this to end somehow. But there must be change of some sort... Many of my friends have left the country for political or practical reasons. They don't see a future. Russia is full of talented, worthy people. We need to somehow improve our situation and rejoin the civilised world. Life in isolation is impossible."

But for Russians to admit their doubts even to each other is to take a risk, says Baltrukov. "Self-censorship exists everywhere. People are scared to discuss things and remember the repressions of the Soviet Union. That's why it's difficult to know what other people think. People don't want to post things on social media either." He acknowledges that what follows Putin could be worse. "This will also be a very difficult moment for Russia," he says. "Some people do support the idea of a Ruskys Mir [a 'Greater Russia', he says. 'Some people do support support Putin because of his direction. Someone could come to power who will be very pro-war, and not stop until we have victory. In 1917 the Bolsheviks were a tiny marginal party, but they were the most ruthless and seized power. We don't want a repeat of that.'

Not every critic of Vladimir Putin ends up in jail. It still suits Russia's President to present his country as a democracy. Elections are occasionally held against opponents whom Putin goes on to defeat, so enemies are often tolerated if they don't pose a serious threat. Last week, 70 local councillors from across Russia used this remaining freedom to sign a petition calling for his resignation.

Their protest started with a letter from councillors in St Petersburg which called for Putin to be indicted on charges of treason and removed from office. A petition followed. I spoke to a few of the signatories and found them surprisingly willing to discuss their reasoning with me. They don't expect to overpower Putin and they know they risk being jailed. But they offer an interesting picture of opposition to Putin's war. "Yes we are being put under pressure," says Dmitry Baltrukov, a member of St Petersburg's Smolinskoye council. "But staying silent isn't an option."

The council then voted to send the letter to the State Duma in Moscow. It was a huge risk, but the natural next step of protest. Some members of the council have already been summoned by local police, accused of 'actions aimed at discrediting the Russian government'. Clearly there are limits to how much opposition Putin is prepared to tolerate. But as casualties in Ukraine mount, that opposition is growing. "A bunch of young, capable people will die in this war or become disabled," says Dmitry Palyuga, 35. "This war is a catastrophe for the Russian Federation." Besides crippling the country's economy, the war will devastate Russian society. "Those who return will somehow have to continue their lives here in peacetime – it will be difficult. Previous wars have shown us we will once again have a 'lost generation' who will be really difficult to integrate back into civilian society."

Both Baltrukov and Palyuga have paid the price for a higher profile. They were each fined £700 for discrediting the authorities – but risked being jailed for up to 15 years. "We want to show

could be little more than spectators in this process, he said. But we should not frighten ourselves by imagining the 'surefire horrors' of ethnic conflict in a disintegrating Russian Federation. "The Balkan wars but with nuclear weapons." He did not want to downplay the dangers if Russia split apart, he said, but an 'apocalyptic nightmare' was not preordained. Instead, just as the Soviet Union faded into history, there could be a relatively orderly and even cordial divorce. Putin might not see it this way. Would he order a nuclear strike on Ukraine to prevent defeat there, and, ultimately, Russia tearing itself apart? He is certainly doubling down in Ukraine. His speech this week promised a partial mobilisation, throwing another 300,000 into the meat grinder of his failing war. The Kremlin has arranged for the so-called 'People's Republics' it controls in eastern Ukraine to start voting this week to become part of Russia proper. So an attack on them would be an attack on the Motherland – and for Putin, Ukraine's counter-offensive is Nato's war, too.

He accused Nato of trying to "blackmail" Russia with nuclear weapons. But Russia also had the 'means of destruction... If the territorial integrity of our country is threatened, we will certainly use all the means at our disposal to protect Russia and our people. This is not a bluff. Earlier, Andrey Gureyov, a thugish member of the Duma, who was once a senior general, had said that Russia could turn Britain 'into a Martian desert in three minutes flat'.

For the time being, Nato governments are worrying more about Russian tactical nuclear weapons – the smaller bombs that might be used to destroy a village or a regiment – and less about missiles fired from Siberia to London. US officials say there is no evidence, yet, of such small nuclear weapons being moved into Ukraine. But that could change. Then it might be a question of whether Putin thinks destiny has chosen him to save Mother Russia. One long-standing Kremlin observer tells me Putin is a man 'driven by a dark sense of mission', his hands already bathed in blood. But Shvets says Putin has made a career out of bluffing – building his Potemkin village – and is bluffing now.

In interviews, Putin likes to tell a story from his childhood when he chased a rat into a corner on the landing of his apartment block in Leningrad. The rat turned on the young Putin, teeth bared. "There, on that stair landing, I got a quick and lasting lesson in the meaning of the word 'cornered'." The lesson for Nato and Ukraine is clear: a cornered rat is unpredictable – and dangerous.

'Putin put himself in a corner from which he has no escape. He has killed his country'

Truss's gamble

The Energy Price Guarantee may cost much less than is feared

JULIAN JESSOP

Europe's gas supplies are now expected to remain adequate even during the colder months

But there are two reasons the headline-grabbing cost estimates are misleading. The first is that the upfront costs of the freeze itself will be at least partly offset by savings elsewhere. For example, the fuel subsidies will keep inflation down – making it more likely that the economy will avoid deep recession. This should, in turn, mean higher tax revenues and lower spending on other welfare benefits. Yes, the cost of the Energy Price Guarantee is uncertain – but this is not so much a bug as a design feature. The whole point of the plan is to transfer a huge risk to the broader shoulders of the government, rather than expect individual households and businesses to take the full hit. Over time, this should also be seen as a positive for UK assets – including sterling. The new government's response has been much more decisive than that of many other European countries, notably Germany, where the risks of a deep recession are now much greater.

The second point is that gas prices have been falling recently, and the whole cap might not cost nearly as much as people fear. Mr Johnson's colleagues at the IFS made their forecasts based on estimates from August on what will happen to gas prices next year. Those estimates have since come down quite a lot. Back then, for example, wholesale gas for delivery in January was priced at 824p per therm but now it's around



550p. Throughout next year, gas prices are expected to be significantly lower than was feared in August. Suddenly, things don't look so bleak. This isn't just crystal-balling. Earlier this week, the actual price of wholesale gas plunged to 320p per therm – almost half the August peak.

Why such a sharp fall? Perhaps we should ask why people panicked so much last month. At the time, western European countries were building up stocks ahead of the winter, compounded by speculation of widespread shortages as Russia closed the Nord Stream 1 pipeline to Germany. These pressures have now eased. Gas stocks are now at comfortable levels, with Germany at an impressive 90 per cent.

Europe's gas supplies are now expected to remain adequate even during the colder months. Underlying demand is also weakening, as economies slow and governments, households and businesses all look for new ways to save energy. In some cases, energy-intensive businesses such as aluminium, ceramics, even too roll, are cutting production – or even, unfortunately, closing entirely. Turning wood into toilet paper is surprisingly energy-intensive, and when prices surge, the business risks becoming unviable. Hake, one of Germany's oldest too roll suppliers, went bust last week.

Meanwhile, imports of liquefied natural gas (LNG) have been strong, helping to ease overall prices. Russia's military failures in Ukraine have raised hopes of an early resolution to that crisis – though that may be wishful thinking. But in any case, it is reasonable to speculate that gas prices may end up far lower than has been feared. This suggests the final bill for the UK energy bailout could be less than half of the £150 billion that was originally suggested.

Rather than damaging economic credibility, the Energy Price Guarantee could prove to be a masterstroke. It is a pragmatic response that reflects the scale of the economic and social crisis – but thanks to a collapse in the wholesale price of gas, the final bill should be much smaller than anticipated. 'Trussonomics' I, conventional thinking 0.

Julian Jessop is an independent economist and Fellow at the Institute of Economic Affairs.

But what about the cost to the taxpayer? Giving strong incentives to save energy will be twice as expensive as it was a year ago – the new rate kicks in, household energy will still be there. As of next month, when percentage of their budgets. Market signals households should see the biggest gains as a rural areas, or the north. Lower-income use the most energy – so people in colder the biggest benefit will go to households that tribal impact either. Oligarchs aside, In fact, it's not so bad in terms of its distribution (as the furlough scheme was) if energy prices remain high.

Nonetheless, the chosen 'Plan B' is at least simple. Easy to communicate. It should be far more effective than a patchwork of smaller measures in lifting the huge cloud of uncertainty hanging over households and businesses. It will also not have to be continually revised and extended (as the furlough businesses. It will also not have to be continually revised and extended (as the furlough scheme was) if energy prices remain high.

Let's be clear: it's a massive state intervention in the markets which will subsidise the energy bills of every consumer regardless of need. An oligarch heating the swimming pool in his London mansion will benefit from the capped cost just as much as the pensioner in Blackpool trying to survive winter. Any half-decent economist could have come up with a better-targeted, more efficient and potentially cheaper 'Plan A'.

The Prime Minister proposes to cap the unit price of energy for households for two years, starting next month, with the government compensating suppliers for any additional costs. Similar support has been offered to businesses and other energy users (such as schools) for an initial period of six months.

are set to be proved wrong. looks like it will be a lot smaller and sceptics even the bank bailouts. Fortunately, the bill More than the furlough scheme, more than most expensive economic policy in history. lion or more over two years, making it the Guarantee' could cost the taxpayer £150 billion or more over two years, making it the estimates suggested that the 'Energy Price Guarantee' could cost the taxpayer £150 billion or more over two years, making it the

its economic credibility at risk. Indeed, early that the new energy price plan puts cost of borrowing – and to the fall in the value of the pound. But there are two reasons the headline-grabbing cost estimates are misleading. The first is that the upfront costs of the freeze itself will be at least partly offset by savings elsewhere. For example, the fuel subsidies will keep inflation down – making it more likely that the economy will avoid deep recession. This should, in turn, mean higher tax revenues and lower spending on other welfare benefits. Yes, the cost of the Energy Price Guarantee is uncertain – but this is not so much a bug as a design feature. The whole point of the plan is to transfer a huge risk to the broader shoulders of the government, rather than expect individual households and businesses to take the full hit. Over time, this should also be seen as a positive for UK assets – including sterling. The new government's response has been much more decisive than that of many other European countries, notably Germany, where the risks of a deep recession are now much greater.

Labour has a problem – but it's not Keir Starmer

ROD LIDDLE



tumists who still believe they are on the express train to the Finland Station, with the royals firmly in their sights.

Long gone are the days when Labour could claim to be the voice of the working class, a working class which is deeply patriotic and has always adored the royal family. It is true that the party always had its high-born far-left element, which used to consider itself the 'intelligentsia' – but it is only in the past ten years that they have come to dominate. There is a fringe debate at Labour's conference on the future of the monarchy, featuring Polly Toynbee (yes, hurry, hurry, get your tickets now!) and you can expect plenty of delegates to boo when the National Anthem is played.

Meanwhile, the left-wing MP Clive Lewis has delivered himself of the opinion that intimations about the Queen's devotion to duty and service were 'a lie' and that he viewed the queues of people waiting to see the Queen lying-in-state with 'bemusement followed by a touch of despair'.

It is in that very admission that the hope for the Conservative party resides. I suspect that the vast majority of Labour activists feel similarly to Mr Lewis. They find themselves utterly estranged from the majority of people in the country, especially those over the age of 30 and even more so those living in those famous Red Wall constituencies. Estranged on this issue as on many others – identity politics, for a start. But most importantly, estranged on the issue of patriotism and a concomitant respect for the history of country and its institutions.

It was this, as much as Brexit or Boris Johnson'schutzpah, which won the 2019 election for the Tories. Voter after voter I spoke to in the lead-up to the election cited Jeremy Corbyn's apparent hatred for his own country as the main reason they wouldn't be voting Labour.

Keir Starmer understands this and has done what he can to persuade voters that the Labour party is no longer a self-loathing congregation of gobby deluded children. But the gobby deluded children are still there, in their hundred or so thousand.

SPECTATOR.CO.UK/RODLIDDLE

The argument continues online.

unless it is a firm which manufactures organic hemp-based blankets for disabled unicorns.

The Labour party, meanwhile, gets its dosh largely from organisations which are striving to greatly lower the country's carbon emissions by organising strikes so that the trains and buses don't run. I suppose this is preferable. It is still, to my mind, more likely than not that we will soon have a government in which Labour is the largest party, and for those of you who suspect this may not be a fortuitous outcome, let me provide you with a little succour. The thing is not yet quite in the bag, I think – even if, given the government's performance, it really should be. I know that I am not reading the room terribly well here, but I think Sir Keir Starmer has

The next election is not quite in the bag for Labour yet – even if, given the current government, it should be

His problem, however, is that he has the Labour party to deal with, and beneath the surface it is still the convocation of young, perpetually outraged, comparatively affluent, white middle-class people who have nothing in common with either Labour's voter base, such as it was, or indeed with the vast majority of people in our country.

The obvious example of this came last week when Starmer announced that the Labour party would kick off its annual conference with a rendition of 'God Save the King'. Cue an immediate uproar among the Momen-



I see that Green campaigning groups are angry that the Conservative party has received donations from the aviation industry, because they are not in favour of aeroplanes. Or, at least, these campaigners are not in favour of aeroplanes until they are not in favour of aeroplanes. A holiday at some eco lodge in Indonesia, perhaps, where they get to gum at an orangutan and hide the locals about logging.

The protestors, then, simultaneously want the aviation industry not to exist but still to avail themselves of its services: this is another marvellous example of the left's flight from reality. It is all a little like the various institutions which have decided to stop their sponsorship agreements with petroleum and gas companies. The South Bank Centre and the British Film Institute both ended their sponsorship arrangements with Shell a couple of years ago because they do not approve of the exploitation of fossil fuels. It is a shame for the BFI, then, that many movies made are printed on a petroleum product, polyester (usually polyethylene terephthalate). Again, they wish we had no further exploitation of fossil fuels except, presumably, for the purpose of making movies.

Similarly, the National Portrait Gallery recently decided to end its sponsorship deal with BP. I assume the people who made this decision wish to stay warm this winter, and I assume they do not all have their own private windfarms or heat pumps or modular nuclear reactors in their back gardens. Further, I presume they are expunging from their collection all oil paintings, or perhaps putting up more of those stupid little signs underneath each portrait saying: 'This work of art was made by raping the Earth of its precious resources and killing polar bears, plus it's a picture of an old white man. We deeply apologise for all of these transgressions, much as we do for our own history, lives of privilege and general existence on this planet.'

The truth is that this is petulant, adolescent, performative, virtue-signalling cant, just as it is with the eco lobby who want to stop the Tories getting money from airline companies. It is hard to think of any corporation of which these people would approve,

The bulldog of Brazil

What tricks will Bolsonaro play to win a second term?

OLIVER BASCIANO

ner, will win in the second-round run-off.

Drama enough? Not for Brazil. Bolsonaro has long been casting doubt over the integrity of the country's electronic voting system, suggesting he will not recognise a vote that goes against him. Brazil, the fourth-largest democracy in the world, has had completely paperless elections since the new millennium, with almost no recorded cases of fraud. At one of a series of rallies across the country's major cities last year, Bolsonaro said of the forthcoming fight: 'I can't participate in a farce like the one being sponsored by the Superior Electoral Tribunal.' Calling a meeting of foreign diplomats in July, he repeated his claims concerning the electronic ballot system. 'We still have time to solve the problem, with the participation of the armed forces,' he says repeatedly. 'Only God will oust me.'

Earlier this month, the election authorities acquiesced to a request from the military for further tests on the integrity of the wire-less vote-counting machines. Bolsonaro's defence minister, a recently retired general,

Bolsonaro has long been casting doubt over the integrity of the country's electronic voting system

promised the army will 'go until the end' to ensure the right result come the first voting round on 2 October.

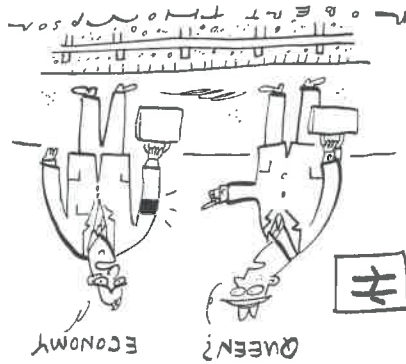
People spoke of a coup in America after the cosplay at the Capitol in Washington DC in January 2021. The threat of a military coup in Brazil is real. This country has spent more of its 200 years of independence as a dictatorship than not, and its constitution retains many elements of the former military regime.

The left is taking the prospect extremely seriously. Much of Lula's energy seems to have been spent behind the scenes shorting up support for democracy. Bolsonaro, meanwhile, is said to have been sounding out an appetite for autocracy. The public-facing campaigns have a strange feel to them, because both candidates are playing to their core bases: rallies and motorcade parades for Lula; rallies and visits to samba schools for Bolsonaro. Eighty per cent of the electorate have told pollsters they have already made up their minds as to which candidate they're

Jail, death or victory? These are the three alternatives Brazil's incumbent leader says await him. It is an unusual rallying call for an election campaign, but this is Jair Bolsonaro, the 'Trump of the Tropics', and he may well be right. Bolsonaro was elected in 2018 when his initial rival, Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva, the country's former president, was jailed midway through the campaign on corruption charges. Bolsonaro, a relative unknown, beat the replacement Workers party candidate by a ten percentage point margin.

His formula was to focus on anti-corruption and conduct his campaign predominantly via social media. The use of YouTube, Facebook and, most importantly, the gargantuan WhatsApp groups that are part of daily life here enabled Bolsonaro to project different images to discrete sectors of society. Evangelical churchgoers got the faithful family man; gym bros and *sertanejo* country music fans were introduced to the gun-loving former military captain; the business world was presented with an anti-communist crusader.

Now, however, with spiralling inflation and a disastrous handling of the pandemic – some 685,000 Brazilians died – the President is finding it harder for his anti-politics message to cut through to all but hardened Bolsonaroistas. Thirty-three million people face daily hunger. A senate inquiry into his failure to buy vaccines, in a country with almost no anti-vax movement, recommended criminal charges against him. Moreover, his old rival Lula is back in the running having been released from prison in 2019, corruption charges quashed. All polls are predicting the leftist, with his right-of-centre running part-



Some of history's other Charles IIIs: — Charles III, King of Naples (1382-86): forced Pope Urban VI into exile, then moved to Hungary, whose throne he had assumed through marriage. Was assassinated. — Charles III, King of Navarre (1387-1425): made peace with France. — Charles III, Duke of Savoy (1504-53): lost when France invaded Savoy in 1536. Remained king in name but spent the rest of his life in exile. — Charles III, Duke of Bourbon (1505-21): tried to regain independence from France by partitioning the kingdom. Fled to Italy when the plot was discovered. — Charles III, King of Spain (1759-88): invaded the Kingdom of Naples and claimed it for Spain. — Charles III, Duke of Parma (1849-54): placed Parma under martial law. Was assassinated.

Death by numbers

Who has had the most highly attended state funeral? Some estimates for numbers who physically attended service or procession: — Duke of Wellington (1852): 1.5 million — Victor Hugo (1885): 2 million — Ayron Senna (1994): 3 million — John Paul II (2005): 4 million — Ayatollah Khomeini (1989): 10 million — C.N. Annadurai, chief minister of Tamil Nadu in southern India (1969): 15 million

In hock

Some countries that have a larger national debt than Britain's (% of GDP):

Japan	263.1%
Greece	189.3%
Italy	152.6%
US	132.6%
Spain	117.7%
France	114.4%
Canada	112.1%
Belgium	107.9%
UK	99.6%

Power points

Which countries currently have the highest and lowest retail electricity prices? (US cents per kWh)

Germany	39
Bermuda	38
Denmark	34
Portugal	32
Belgium	32
Cayman Islands	31
LOWEST	
Sudan, Venezuela, Iran	0.8
Ethiopia, Kyrgyzstan, Cuba	1
Libya, Zimbabwe	2
Bhutan, Angola, Suriname	2

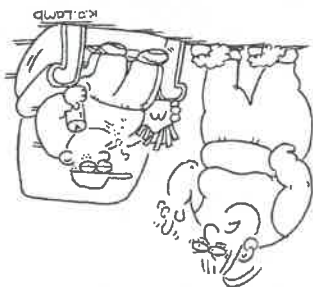
Source: electrifyrate.com

backing and won't be swayed. (Luíla and Bolsonaro aren't the only presidential contenders, but they are the only ones with any serious chance.)

Bolsonaro is pouring government resources into getting himself through to the second-round run-off (bribes range from election-period poverty-relief payments to reducing to zero import taxes on the whey protein powder beloved of bodybuilders) and securing places for his political allies in congress. But serious election watchers like the academic Perez Oliveira believe that the really dirty fighting – perhaps a coup – will come after the second round. 'Bolsonaro knows perfectly well that he will not win fairly. He does believe in polls,' says Oliveira. 'Therefore all his movements must be read in terms of the coup's agenda.' In the weeks between the votes, he predicts, Bolsonaro will ramp up the agitating against the legitimacy of the election apparatus and encourage supporters to take to the streets. Violence, even without such top-down provocation, is inevitable. In fact it has already begun. In recent months two Lula supporters have been killed by Bolsonaro acolytes. The violence serves in part to intimidate opposition voters and that tactic is already doing business with Brazil. As they do with various dictatorships around the world.'

In 2020 de Moraes led an investigation against alleged instances of fake news being spread by Bolsonaro-friendly bloggers, and after the messages of coup-ambivalent businessmen were revealed this year, de Moraes ordered raids of their offices by federal police. It is his electoral commission that will either acquiesce to Bolsonaro's demands of a parallel count by the military (who were given a supervisory role to last year's elections), or allow Lula's likely victory under the current process. In recent weeks they have been hammering that out behind closed doors with uniformed generals, the meetings going un-minuted. Whoever takes the green and yellow presidential sash come inauguration day will owe de Moraes, and the judicial apparatus, a dangerous debt that is unlikely to be forgotten.

'If you're not careful you'll grow up to be a government health minister.'



Then there's the equally worrying risk of a judicial counter-coup. Supreme court justice Alexandre de Moraes has recently been appointed to head the country's electoral court, finding himself in a very powerful position. São Paulo-based political analyst Alex Hochuli says: 'We're faced with an unavoidable situation: confrontation between naked [coup-mongering] on the one hand, and on the other, a defence of "institutionality" by forces who'd gladly usher in a judicial dictatorship... the coup has already happened.'

Listen to

The Book Club

Sam Leith's weekly podcast

The *Spectator's* literary editor interviews authors on everything from art to history, science to poetry, and much more.

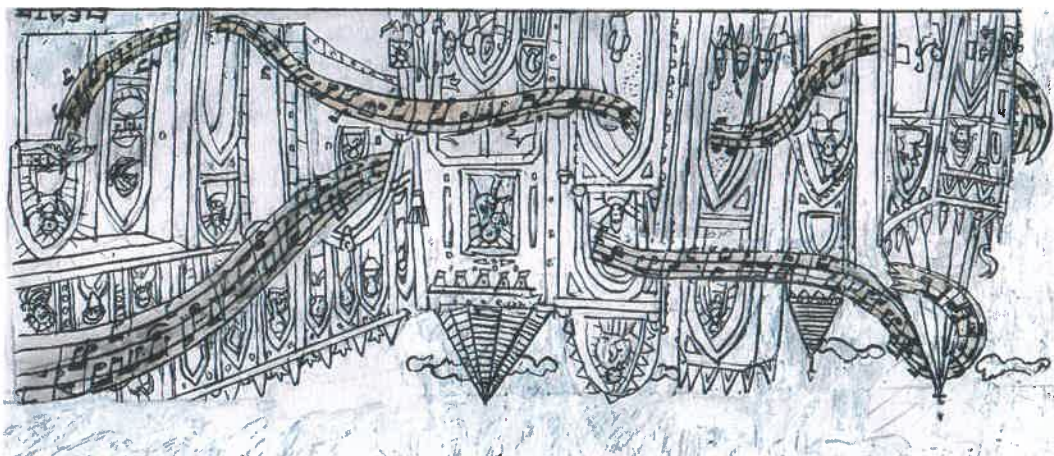
A new episode every Wednesday.

Listen for free at [spectator.co.uk/bookspodcast](https://www.spectator.co.uk/bookspodcast)

THE SPECTATOR | 24 SEPTEMBER 2022 | WWW.SPECTATOR.CO.UK

COMPOSER'S NOTEBOOK

James MacMillan



The first time I met the Queen was at the 75th birthday party of the great Russian

cellist Mstislav Rostropovich, which was held, astonishingly, at Buckingham Palace in 2002. Before dinner there was a short concert given by the London Symphony Orchestra, conducted by Seiji Ozawa.

After this, the assembled guests mingled with the royal family and members of the orchestra. I knew many of them and got lost in musical conversation just as the dinner guests were being ushered towards their tables, a memo which I clearly missed.

Then the orchestral players were ushered out in the opposite direction and I found myself marooned in the reception hall with the royals and their puzzled staff, who stared at me wondering who on earth I was. Before anything else could happen two large doors opened and I could see the assembled guests at their tables (where I should have been), all standing to attention as the royal family walked in. The only thing I could do was to join on at the end of this distinguished line, the servants glaring at me as I channelled my inner Mr Bean. I eventually got to my table where my fellow guests stared open-jawed at me. They included the Polish composer Krzysztof Penderecki, Dmitri Shostakovich's widow and Prince Michael of Kent. The place next to me was set for the Rt Hon the Baroness Thatcher, but she didn't turn up.

In the hours before the Queen's funeral, my grown-up children, via our WhatsApp group, were keeping me up to speed with views expressed on Twitter by some of the Scottish Nationalist/socialist/separatist fraternity who, strangely, seemed less than impressed that the two commissions for new music at the funeral had gone to two Scottish composers. Judith Weir

There were two world premieres during the Queen's funeral on Monday. One was a beautiful setting of some verses from Psalm 42 by Judith Weir, the Master of the King's Music, and the other was an anthem by me, a setting of a passage from Romans 8, 'Who Shall Separate Us From The Love of Christ?'

I wonder if Judith had to deal with some of the questions I got on the day. How could I have written the music so fast considering that Her Majesty only died on 8 September? Of course, these things are planned years in advance, so I composed the anthem some time ago. I was asked to keep quiet about it until Sunday night when the order of service was published. I was told that this passage from Romans 8 was important to the Queen, as it gets right to the heart of her relationship with Jesus. Her Christian faith was an inspiration to millions, perhaps billions, around the world, and her ability to communicate it with devotion and pastoral insight in her Christmas messages and on other occasions was the focus of significance in her life and example. I have rarely reflected so deeply on a text, both while I was setting it and in the years since.

The Queen was a central presence throughout my whole life and in the lives of countless others for many years. Her quiet devotion to this country, this people, this Commonwealth, was the deciding factor for many people in their realisation of just how creative our constitutional monarchy is. I believe that it nurtures a true and profound democracy, perhaps the most successful, the most efficient and the most humane the world has ever seen.

It was a great honour to write this funeral anthem, knowing as I did that it would be sung by the choirs of Westminster Abbey and His Majesty's Chapel Royal, St James's Palace, and conducted by James O'Donnell. My publishers Boosey & Hawkes are expediting its release so other choirs can get hold of it. Is it difficult to sing? Well, it's unaccompanied, of course, and that takes great skill for any choir, amateur and professional alike. It divides into seven and eight parts, so the choir must be big enough and confident enough to handle all those different layers. One of the greatest joys in my composing life is setting the word Alleluia. I never tire of it, and it can be done in so many ways. This anthem culminates in a series of ecstatic Alleluias, the eight vocal lines rippling up and down before settling to a serene Amen. It was my way of expressing joy at the gift of the Queen's life with us these past 96 years.

Sir James MacMillan was composer-conductor of the BBC Philharmonic from 2000 to 2009.

"In life, 'us' is
more important
than 'I'."

When your name's on every one of 800 million bakery products sold each year, it would be easy to let it go to your head. Not to mention when you've starred alongside the likes of George Clooney and Kermit the Frog. But Jonathan Warburton grew up with a simple bit of Northern advice, handed down from his parents, that has always kept his feet on the ground. 'In life, 'us' is more important than 'I', his father would say. This isn't just about keeping your ego in check or thinking about the needs of others, it's sound advice which has fuelled the family's success. A reflection of their family values and a testament to the power of good advice. The kind of advice that comes from someone who knows you well. The kind of powerful good advice that you can expect from Evelyn Partners. Because we take the time to truly understand you. What motivates, inspires and drives you. To help you flourish.


The power
of good advice
since 1836.
evelyn.com

evelyn
PARTNERS

Wealth, accountancy and business advisory services

Jonathan Warburton, Chairman.





Can-do is unwavering support in challenging times

Even in the most uncertain times, we're always here for you — helping you continue on the path to achieving your goals.

Discover more at candowealth.com

Investment involves risk

Build your wealth with confidence

cg/
Canaccord
Genuity
Wealth Management

Leicester and the downside of diversity

DOUGLAS MURRAY



As I have said many times in recent years, if you import the world's people you import the world's problems. Which is not to say that you do not also get some upsides. The upsides of 'diversity' are focused on all the time. But we have a curious habit of downplaying the downsides. Just one of which erupted in the city of Leicester last week.

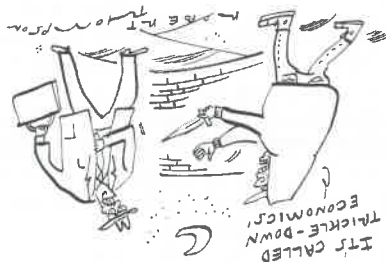
The origins of the disturbances are disputed, but what is agreed on is that they initially broke out between local Muslims and Hindus in the last days of August. During the India-Pakistan cricket match on the 28th, local fans of the Indian side began shouting 'Pakistan Murdabad' ('Death to Pakistan'). A Sikh man was attacked and before long both sides were chanting slogans against the other on the streets of the city. This escalated into attacks on property and Muslim gangs tearing down religious flags in Hindu areas. Before long it was being claimed on social media that a mosque had been attacked, which turned out to be untrue but which got the Muslim gangs even more mobilised.

Hindu and Muslim groups across social media started to call for their men to come out on the streets – which they did. The Hindu chanted 'Jai Shree Ram' ('Praise Lord Ram') and some were filmed carrying weapons. Muslims retaliated in kind and in one video were seen setting light to a Hindu flag. This inflamed tensions further and became a political scandal in the Indian media.

Ancient enmities cannot be solved by the introduction of the occasional youth centre and game of ping-pong

By Monday the High Commission of India in London announced that it had taken the matter up with the UK authorities and was calling on them 'to provide protection to the affected people'. The affected people being the Indian community in Leicester whose Hindu religion was being attacked.

It is quite something for the Indian government to be calling for a cessation of intra-religious violence on the streets of Britain. That is the sort of thing the North Koreans and Chinese Communist party sometimes do for the Iols. But not something that would have been expected from an allied state. Still, there are a number of responses that you might have to the disturbances in Leicester. One is to do what most of the mainstream



Soon charming people like Mohammed Hijab, who rotates between presenting himself as a reasoned interlocutor and a street agitator, arrived on the scene. Hijab made a slight name for himself last year by whipping up a mob on the streets of London. At one anti-Israeli protest addressed by Hijab in inflammatory terms, a masked man was filmed chanting 'We'll find some Jews. We want their blood', though Hijab says he had left the protest by that time and later tried to calm things down. Of course the police did believe of the British police these days is that as long as a mob can be dispersed at some point, it counts as a great victory for the force. This week Hijab cropped up in Leicester to whip up his followers. Among other things he told them that Hindus are ridiculous to whip up his followers. Among other things he told them that Hindus are ridiculous to whip up his followers.

There are all sorts of advantages to a multicultural society. But the downside is that we are only one internet rumour, flag-attack or ethnic chant away from civil unrest. Not my own preferred state for the country, but then I didn't make the rules, and it's hardly surprising that at such moments the people who did choose to keep their heads down.

There are all sorts of advantages to a multicultural society. But the downside is that we are only one internet rumour, flag-attack or ethnic chant away from civil unrest. Not my own preferred state for the country, but then I didn't make the rules, and it's hardly surprising that at such moments the people who did choose to keep their heads down.

There are all sorts of advantages to a multicultural society. But the downside is that we are only one internet rumour, flag-attack or ethnic chant away from civil unrest. Not my own preferred state for the country, but then I didn't make the rules, and it's hardly surprising that at such moments the people who did choose to keep their heads down.

There are all sorts of advantages to a multicultural society. But the downside is that we are only one internet rumour, flag-attack or ethnic chant away from civil unrest. Not my own preferred state for the country, but then I didn't make the rules, and it's hardly surprising that at such moments the people who did choose to keep their heads down.

There are all sorts of advantages to a multicultural society. But the downside is that we are only one internet rumour, flag-attack or ethnic chant away from civil unrest. Not my own preferred state for the country, but then I didn't make the rules, and it's hardly surprising that at such moments the people who did choose to keep their heads down.

'Keir's not Superman, he can't do it all by himself'

Is Wes Streeting Labour's next leader?

ISABEL HARDMAN



Streeting is a very engaging politician who, unlike a surprising number of his colleagues, doesn't struggle with eye contact. But I notice when he's telling these stories from his childhood, he spends most of his time looking at a spot on the wall. His eyes flick back as he adds: 'It's one of the reasons I'm a member of the Labour party, because I think it's part of our DNA to want to tackle these inequalities and injustices in our society.'

Most Labour activists have a tale about going campaigning with their parents. Streeting's family were politically active too, but he confesses his first campaign story is less than ideal: 'My nan was a member of the Labour party, and was very active, she dropped a load of leaflets round for me and my mum to deliver around the estate. And all my mum said was "Don't tell Nanny we haven't delivered them."'

Streeting's nan, Libby, was the subject of a news story earlier this year when it emerged that she had spent time in prison as the cellmate of Christine Keeler. She was jailed after refusing to help the police with their investigations into her boyfriend Bill, whom she later married. Bill was more familiar with prison than Libby, going in and out of it after convictions for armed robbery. Libby's older sister Esme was friends with the Kray twins, and family legend has it that the gangsters named one of their nightclubs after her. Streeting himself visited his grandad in prison, but didn't know the full extent of his underworld connections until the *Daily Mail* uncovered them.

He replaced Jonathan Ashworth as shadow health secretary in last year's reshuffle. The NHS is often Labour's comfort

after I was born. My dad was a very present father in my life but my mum was bringing me up as a single mum during the week, and I spent weekends with my dad. And for my mum, life was very hard.

'Plenty of times the money in the meter ran out, so I've got some great memories of the lights going out'

'There were plenty of times where the money in the meter ran out, so I've got some great memories of the lights going out at home.' Streeting became used to seeing his mother doing arithmetic as she did the grocery shopping, putting items back as she realised she couldn't afford them. 'I remember making her cry once because she was putting pocket money that my grandad had given to me. And my mum was really struggling, of putting stuff back. I said to her, "Mummy, you can have this." She was touched by the gesture but also that's an awful position for parents to be in.'

When Labour MPs gossip about who could be their next leader, Wes Streeting's name invariably comes up. Like Angela Rayner, the party's deputy leader, Labour's shadow health secretary spends half his time insisting he's not running for the top job. Also like Rayner, he's never actually stood for it – yet. But there have been plenty of moments in the past year when some of his comrades have wished he was the leader of the opposition rather than Keir Starmer.

Streeting became suspiciously more visible as the 'Beergate' investigation

into whether Starmer and Rayner breached Covid restrictions reached its climax earlier this year. When I mentioned his frequent media appearances to another Labour front bench, he shrugged: 'When has Wes not been running?'

It's true that Streeting, who was elected as the MP for Ilford North in 2015, often seems to be running for something. He was president of the National Union of Students for two terms between 2008 and 2010. The NUS is even harder work than the Labour party when it comes to factional infighting, particularly if, like Streeting, you're a centrist. He worked as head of education for Stonewall and was a councillor in Redbridge, before he entered parliament. At Cambridge, he was also active in student politics. His early life, however, isn't so typical of a Blairite politician. 'I'm still one of a small minority of [MPs] who grew up experiencing poverty,' he explains, as he tells me about his upbringing in Tower Hamlets. 'I was born to teenage parents, my mum was 18 when I was born, my dad was 17. I was an accident and that relationship didn't last more than a year

ANCIENT AND MODERN

Crowd control



Public dissent, from riots to republicans objecting to homage to the Queen, is dealt with by the police, a force created in 1829. Romans too faced such problems, though many had no qualms about crushing free speech; and it took them some time to get a grip on them. During the decline of the Roman Republic (c. 130-27 BC), violent

crowds supporting one political faction or another regularly fought it out on the streets of Rome. The city authorities could do little but muster whatever forces were at hand to deal with it. Augustus tackled the problem head on, locating his Praetorian guard within the city and backing it up with three Urban Cohorts and official night-watchmen (mainly on the lookout for fires). Later emperors expanded the system by drawing on the standing army to provide *stationarii* with specific guard and crowd-control duties. We even hear of plain-clothes soldiers acting as snoopers. But the real question was how

protests and disorder, from fighting over e.g. sporting events and top actors being prevented from appearing at festivals, were handled. The central point here is that emperors needed to keep the people on side. Bloodshed was the last thing they wanted. So on certain issues (e.g. protests over food shortages), the people knew they would be heard.

Over time, in line with Seneca's wise advice ('resort to punishment only when all else fails'), a graduated response to such situations evolved, aiming above all to avoid excessive force. Simple insults and abuse were best ignored. Personal appeals for moderation from someone of high standing were often effective: when bakers rioted in Ephesus, the governor said he ought to imprison them but reprimanding them was more in the general interest. (Hadrian once calmed a riot by having his letter read out.) If protests continued, the leaders were arrested, and if that failed, troops were called in. That alone was often enough to disperse the crowds.

As for republican protests, the police have learned to treat them the Roman way – by turning a deaf ear. —Peter Jones

by nurses, who are balloting for strike action across Britain for the first time in the history of their Royal College, but will not be joining their picket lines, saying the party and trade unions have 'complementary but different roles to play'. Starmer, he says, has been right to be so clear about frontbenchers not joining strikes.

Where his leader has been less clear is on gender politics. Starmer and Rachel Reeves and many other top figures spent months agonising over whether only women have the 'best and very frustrating elements' of the health service during that time. 'I'm going to be the patients' champion, and I'm not going to have any patience with producer interests, and with the sort of bureaucratic excuses that let patients down sometimes.'

It was on Budget Day in March last year that he ended up in A&E with severe pain caused by a kidney stone. The urologists noticed something unusual on his scan, and decided to investigate further. He was given his diagnosis a few weeks later over the phone when out campaigning with Labour colleagues. The doctor told him he would need to have an operation to remove the tumour, but the prognosis was very good. 'He stopped and said, "Do you have

'I'm going to be the patients' champion and I'm not going to have patience with bureaucratic excuses'

any questions, any reactions, how are you feeling?" I said, "Well if you'll excuse my language, doctor, you've delivered the shit sandwich rather well..."

Because of Covid restrictions, Street- ing couldn't take his partner, Joe, into the hospital with him for the operation. 'It was the loneliest I've ever felt in my entire life.' As a result, he pushed hard for family visit- ing rights to be restored as soon as possible in hospitals.

In his speech to Labour party confer- ence next week, he plans to 'put my tanks very firmly on the Conservative party's lawn on the NHS because the dishonesty of Liz Truss's position is that she pretends that she can fix the immediate crisis in front of us without significant extra resource. And I just don't think that's credible.' He adds: 'But I think what's challenging for the left is also to understand and accept that there isn't a cred- ible, long-term answer to the NHS that only involves more money going in.

'I'm absolutely committed to NHS free at the point of use, publicly funded, but I do think the system needs real reform in terms of the model of care we have in this coun- try. We are spending far too much money too far down the patient journey. We're pouring loads of money into hospitals, because we fail to grip conditions much earlier.'

He is sympathetic to the frustrations felt



There are those in Starmer's team who have wondered why their leader couldn't have taken the party into that clearer place himself, rather than relying on others. When I ask Streeting about his ambitions, he uses the stock line of 'you never know what's going to happen in politics', before adding: 'I'm very mindful of the fact that Labour's never had a woman leader.' But he also explains that he thinks that as things are, he always 'has a leadership role in the Labour party'. 'After Keir and Rachel, [the health secretary role] will be the hardest job in government after the next election if Labour wins.' He is firmly on Team Keir, 'but Keir's not Super- man, he can't do it all by himself'.

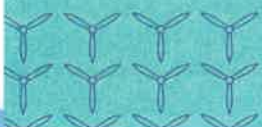
WE PLEDGE TO INVEST £7M A DAY IN HOMEGROWN ENERGY ACTIONS, NOT AMBITIONS WILL SECURE OUR ENERGY FUTURE

It's time to make a shift. That's why at SSE, we're going big. £7 million a day, big. We're investing right here, right now into infrastructure projects across the UK – from building the world's largest offshore wind farm, to delivering 1000s of green jobs, to developing enough renewable energy projects to power 2 in 3 UK homes.

sse.com

WE POWER CHANGE

To find out more about the sustainable investments SSE is making and for verification, visit sse.com/change



The poly-problems of polyamory

MARY WAKEFIELD



The saddest thing I saw this week was a dating advert written by a woman – let's call her Jane – looking for a man to start a family with.

There was nothing sad about Jane per se: she's attractive and accomplished in the usual alarming millennial way. Not only does she have a well-paid job in a tech firm, but she climbs, plays the cello, writes plays and is a near-professional baker. Because young people these days don't drink until they pass out, they have time for hobbies.

Jane is also polyamorous, she mentioned in the ad, just in passing. She is in a committed romantic relationship with three other people and they live in a shared house – and this, I've discovered, is par for the course now in parts of London and across the US. Some 5 per cent of Americans say they're 'polyamorous', and given that almost everyone over 50 is monogamous, this means an awful lot of poly youth.

We're living Gen X-ers might think sex when we hear polyamory, but for Jane and friends, it doesn't seem to be about orgies so much as politics: it's a rejection of convention and 'the false binary of marriage'. One's needs are better met by more than one person, they say, though I'm not sure it's ever occurred to me that my marriage should meet my needs at all. Anyway, polyamory is all very serious and self-aware. 'Ethical non-monogamy' you might hear it called by a grandchild, in which case you can surprise them by knowing that a collection of men and women in a polyamorous relationship is called a 'polycule'.

So here's Jane, nestled in her polycule, enjoying an earnest and ethical life. Here's Jane in a committed relationship with three people, but still at a total loss for some-one to have a child with. And this is what I find sad: that there are growing numbers of polyamorous women out there desperately seeking what they refer to as 'nesting relationships'; women who thought they were liberated but who have nonetheless been blindsided by biology. They want a child and what sounds suspiciously like a husband, but they're sunk now, aren't they? I admire them for their optimism, but how many men are going to jump at the chance to parent in a polycule? 'Yes love, don't worry, I'll hold

the baby while you give Hugo his Thursday sex massage.' The trouble is that they've defined love not as self-sacrifice but as self-fulfilment, and it's a rare man who considers it more personally fulfilling to burp a whingeing baby than to, say, go out scouting for a younger polyamorist.

And even if a nesting partner did somehow ployp into your polycule, you don't want to be a polyamorous mother, Jane. Trust me on this. There's enormous potential for jealousy in polyamory, everyone agrees, so each poly partner needs a lot of reassurance. Poly therapists recommend twice-weekly sessions with *The Jealousy Workbook: Exercises and Insights for Managing Open Relationships* by Kathy Labriola. 'This book will guide

So here's Jane, in a committed relationship with three people but at a loss for someone to have a child with

you through the labyrinth of jealousy and bring you safely out to your widest possible selection of lifestyle choices,' promises Dossie Easton, author of *The Ethical Slut*. Imagine being a new mother, washing nappies, trying to answer emails, struggling with breastfeeding. You hear a light knock and there's Rachel looking hurt with her annotated copy of *The Jealousy Workbook*. Later, just as your baby finally latches on, it's Hugo at the door. 'Uh Jane... it's Thursday?' Your needs are far, far better met by a nice bottle of red and a paid nanny who under no circumstances requires sex.

It's oddly frowned on these days to think



about things from the perspective of the children. Perhaps it interferes with all the self-fulfilment. Happy parents make a happy child as close as anyone gets, and that's blatantly untrue. As long as a kid's parents aren't screaming or hitting each other, I'm not sure it much notices if they're actively happy. A child has different needs: unconditional love and a set of parents to bond with. And this is where polyamory becomes very far from rational or ethical.

It's not just the dubious idea of letting a child grow up with a revolving set of polyamorous lovers; it's that it's often unclear who the child's parents actually are. The internet is full of three-person families, 'throuples', who have had children because 'why not?' 'It meets my needs right now.' The throuples all claim that no one parent is more significant than another.

Ian, Alan and Jeremy, for instance, the authors of *Three Dads and a Baby*, fought a legal battle for all three of them to be named on the birth certificates of their two children in a landmark case in the US. They're regulars on breakfast TV both here and in America. They joke about many hands making light work, and how fabulous it is to have three people to share the washing-up. What they don't much discuss is what happens when throuples unthrouple, which they invariably do. A child who once had three parents in one home may soon have three homes and any number of parents, quite possibly nine if the throuples thruple up again. But happy parents make a happy child, remember.

Tammy Nelson, author of *Open Monogamy*, says that polyamorous parenting is a return to the good old days when new parents were surrounded by relatives who all helped raise a child. It takes a village, she reminds us. But there are villages and villages. For grandparents, aunts and uncles, the children are the focus, not their own relationships with each other, and they're stable. Stability is what a child needs more than anything, and stability is the one thing it's near-impossible for a polyamorous polycule to provide.

SPECTATOR.CO.UK/PODCASTS
Mary Wakefield and Elf Lyons on polyamorous relationships.

The bonus cap was boneheaded but is this the moment to scrap it?



longer-term performance than in the bad old days. Like much else, it will be more efficient and transparent without an overlay of ill-designed EU regulation.

Bring on the banking hubs

Bank branch closures continue apace: more than one in three across the UK in the past decade. Free ATMs are disappearing almost as fast. But amid the panorama of problems ahead, does that really matter? 'Give it a rest,' you might be thinking, 'I pay by card everywhere. In fact I don't even use a card, and if I need anything else from a bank, I chat to a bot.'

Bully for you, but many others still rely on real money and wisely so, because diminishing cash is the simplest budget control and card debt is painfully pernicious. Small busi-

nesses need banks too: think of the newsagent who's a National Lottery franchisee in a town that no longer has paying-in facilities. All this will become more evident in the coming recession. Post offices, pubs, cafes, corner shops, libraries, town halls, churches – and, nowadays, food banks – are the vital threads of social fabric, and banks also have a role. So a scheme announced last year to create shared banking hubs in places that have lost cash facilities was a good thing and it's a disgrace that only two of the first ten chosen sites have opened – at Cambuslang in Scotland and Rochford in Essex. Another 13 hub towns have been named, but all rather tentatively and subject to 'review'. A Cambuslang councillor says the hub is 'busier and busier' and 'bringing life back to the high street'. As other town centres go cold this winter, the least the banks can do, in their own reputational interests as well as the public good, is make sure the hubs happen.

Savers' sacrifice

Here's another thing banks should be doing: paying commensurate deposit rates as official interest rates rise – up another step this

week, perhaps topping 4 per cent next year. Savers were effectively told in 2008 by Mervyn King, then governor of the Bank of England, that their returns would have to be sacrificed for the greater good as rates plunged to avert economic meltdown. Fourteen years later, interest is still negligible while capital is being eaten by inflation, as is the value of most pensions. But according to analysts by Deutsche Bank, high-street banks are currently overflying with cash: they have no need to compete for deposits, no incentive or obligation to offer more attractive rates. And yet again, it's the frugal elderly who will feel the chill.

Back to work? Yes, Ma'am

Did we all take too much time off for mourning? It was clearly wrong of the NHS to postpone vital appointments and idiotic of Center Parcs (which rapidly backtracked on the decision) to tell guests to go home for a day so staff could watch the funeral. But what of all the other closures, from supermarkets and factories to Royal Mail delivery? 'Respect' was mentioned in every Leadership Council was also honest enough to mention the 'reputational risk' of building sites being seen to be busy.

No employer admitted not wanting to pay overtime on days when business was likely to be quiet, but that was surely a factor too – while many furlough-softened workers relished extra time off. And none of this can have helped the UK's productivity deficit, even if the awesomeness of the funeral itself attracts a wave of tourist spending and inward investment. Famously inscrutable as to her personal opinions, the Queen has suffered in death a surfeit of speculation as to what she might really have thought about anything and everything. But knowing her own work ethic and concern for our collective wellbeing, I feel sure she'd be urging us to switch off the telly, get off the sofa and kickstart the economy again.

Chancellor Kwasi Kwarteng – keen to sharpen the City's competitive edge, we're told – wants to remove the legislative cap, imported from Brussels in 2014, that limits bankers' bonuses to 100 per cent of their base salary, or up to 200 per cent with shareholder approval. That raises interesting questions. Was the cap a good idea in the first place? If not, why wasn't it binmed as soon as we left the EU? Is now the ideal moment to do so? And are bankers still a breed of greedy bastards?

The answer to the first question is certainly not. This column called the cap a 'boneheaded' measure that would merely provoke wily moneymen to find ways of gaming an unwelcome restraint on their wealth. Its stated aim was to discourage a return to the excessive risk-taking of the mid-2000s, but banks themselves claimed it increased risk by adding to their fixed costs as base pay rose accordingly. The then Chancellor George Osborne challenged it in the European Court but was beaten back. The scheme's promoters and true believers were left-leaning MEPs – led by a British Lib Dem, Sharon Bowles, now luxuriating in the House of Lords – whose real aim was to punish the Anglo-Saxon financial community for the sins that preceded 2008.

As to why the cap still applies, 20 months after we left the EU, the answer is that scrap-ping it during Covid would have looked wildly insensitive and it was probably never on Rishi Sunak's agenda. Does that make now the right moment? Of course not, but Kwarteng needs markets onside for his borrowing plans and can argue that the City must be free to compete with New York on all fronts, including pay. If he scraps the cap later, when hardship is more widespread, the public response will be even more hostile. And the 'greedy bastards' question? Yes, 'let's make nothing but money' – the slogan of the Wall Street firm Bear Stearns before its collapse – still applies throughout much of the financial world. But its remuneration system, hedged about with deferrals and clawbacks, is far more closely aligned to

BOOKS & ARTS

'The Forest of Bavella, Corsica, 7.10 a.m., 29 April 1868' by Edward Lear
Laura Gascoigne – p45

Jonathan Sumption argues that Nato expansion was probably worth the risk of enduring Russian hostility
Lucasta Miller follows Keats on his last agonising journey to Rome

Ariane Bankes is charmed by Lucian Freud's quirky, misspelt letters
James Walton is comforted to find Michael Palin in a spot of bureaucratic bother at a border crossing

Rupert Christiansen is drawn into an orgiastic danse macabre in Leeds
Lloyd Evans witnesses a masterpiece at Park Theatre
Deborah Ross is too tired for Lena Dunham



WOOLLEY AND WALLIS SAEROOMS LTD

BOOKS

Grand old man of British music

Ralph Vaughan Williams's towering position in our national life is now beyond dispute – and can only grow, says Simon Heffer

Vaughan Williams

by Eric Saylor

OUP, £22.99, pp. 336

**The Captain's Apprentice:
Ralph Vaughan Williams
and the Story of a Folk Song**
by Caroline Davison
Chatto & Windus, £20, pp. 400

Classical music plays hell with people's post-humous reputations, as any admirer of the works of Ralph Vaughan Williams will tell you. In 1972, on the centenary of his birth, there special concerts of his music but the Post Office, which is now more focused on commemorating gay pride, issued a stamp, since the composer's death in 1958 he and his works had gone into an eclipse, not least because of the atomists who controlled the Third Programme and many of our concert halls. These were people who believed the British music-loving public should be fed on a diet of what Kathleen Ferrer called 'three parts and a raspberry, orchestrated'. The eclipse resumed after 1972. For some years it remained the case that finding performance of his works, especially in London concert halls, was equivalent to a moment of rare ecstasy.

But then, from about the late 1980s, things changed. Eminent conductors started to record cycles of his nine symphonies, and works other than 'The Lark Ascending', 'Greenleeves' and the 'Tallis Fantasia' could be spotted on concert programmes. By 2008, the 50th anniversary of his death, he was back in business. Tony Palmer made a superb film about him. Under the rule of Roger Wright, Radio 3 and the Proms at last did something the BBC ought to have been constituted to do: they promoted British music, and not least that of Vaughan Williams.

Something of a turning point came in the 2012 Proms season, when the BBC Scottish Symphony Orchestra, under the brilliant direction of Andrew Manze, performed in

**For some years, finding performances
of Vaughan Williams's works was
equivalent to a moment of rare ecstasy**

Eric Saylor's is in Oxford University Press's 'Master Musicians' series, and is well worth its place in that distinguished company.

The author draws on two great developments in Vaughan Williams studies since the turn of the century. The first is Hugh Cobbe's magnificent initiative to publish the composer's letters, both as a substantial OUP volume and online. The second has been the unfailing commitment of Albion Records, the recording arm of the Vaughan Williams Society, to hunt down scores of many of the composer's unperformed or unrecorded works and record them. Many of these date from the early years of the last century, when Vaughan Williams was cutting his teeth as a composer. Together with the letters, Saylor can draw on this resource to give a far fuller picture of the early years – that is to say, up to 1914 – than any other biography, even the standard one by his widow Ursula Vaughan Williams, and the extensive biographical notes in the catalogue by Michael Kennedy.

Also, there was much about Vaughan Williams's private life that discretion prevented a biographer from publishing while Ursula was still alive (she died in 2007, aged 96). It was widely known that the two had

conducted an affair while Adeline, the composer's first wife, greatly disabled by rheumatoid arthritis, was still alive, and that Adeline not only turned a blind eye but did all she could to encourage and support Ursula. Saylor puts on the record that Ursula had an abortion in about 1941, possibly of the composer's child, and that other of his and Adeline's friends were positively hostile. And Saylor gives a comprehensive account of Vaughan Williams's other activities, notably his life as a teacher, but also as a philanthropist (he bankrolled Gustav Holst from time to time, and put much of his own money into the Leith Hill Festival near his home at Dorking) and man of deep principle. Yet the great value of the book is Saylor's intelligent view of the music, notably his analyses and interpretations of the symphonies and other major works. His evaluation of the sixth symphony – so often, and understandably, seen as a depiction of the terrible war that was just finishing as the composer began to write it in 1944, and an absolutely crucial part of the canon – is particularly intelligent and persuasive, representing the work as a comment simply on the human condition.

Saylor is an American writing from America, albeit with considerable expertise in British music. Some would argue that the essential Englishness of Vaughan Williams's music, the shared and atavistic cultural experience that he has with listeners in his own land, might be hard for an outsider to appreciate; indeed his belief that the 'Holberg Suite' was written by Holst and not Grieg is perplexing. Equally, there is something to be said for the objective view that must be taken instead, in which the music speaks for itself, and illustrates not an incremental step in cultural history but the whole development of a composer. This is a book that every admirer of Vaughan Williams and his music should have and keep.

Caroline Davison's book is initially about the story behind 'The Captain's Apprentice', a fine folk song Vaughan Williams collected

in King's Lynn in 1905. The song tells the tale of a boy taken out of the town's work-house to work on board a merchant ship, and who was so brutally treated by the captain that 'the poor boy died'. Davison is to be commended on the detail she produces about the composer's visit to Norfolk, the people he met there and the songs they sang to him. She correctly provides ample context about Vaughan Williams's folk-song collecting generally, and the other people (such as Cecil Sharp, Maud Karpeles, George Butterworth and Holst) with whom he did it. But then the

book diverts into a biography of the composer's early years, much of which is familiar, and into ruminations on the effect on the author herself of the song that gives her book its title, and of the first 'Norfolk Rhapsody' in which, orchestrated, it plays so integral a part.

Davison appears to have benefited (if that is the word) from a 'creative non-fiction' course at a university. The effects of this are, I fear, seen in other diversions, where she amplifies contemporary reports of court cases about cruel sea captains with her own

imagination of aspects of what else happened. There will be some who think this is a good idea. I am not one. At times I wondered whether her book had been edited at all; it would certainly have benefited from being shorter, more focused and better organised. It is a shame, for her intentions are honourable, and this was an important moment in Vaughan Williams's creative life. I doubt we have seen the last researches into the composer, and the years when he hunted down folk songs still contain much to be uncovered and fitted into place.

Ralph Vaughan Williams: composer, teacher, philanthropist and folk-song collector



GETTY IMAGES

The ultimate gamble

Jonathan Sumption

Not One Inch: America, Russia and the Making of Post-Cold War Stalemate

by M.E. Sarotte

Yale University Press, £25, pp. 568

This is an important and topical book. Mary Sarotte traces the difficult course of Russia's relations with Europe and the United States during the decade which followed the fall of the Berlin wall in 1989, a period which saw Russia's brief dalliance with democracy and NATO's advance to the frontiers of the old Soviet Union.

The story has been told before, but never so fully or so well. In a remarkable historical coup, Sarotte has persuaded the German foreign ministry to open its archives to her, and the Americans to declassify thousands of documents previously closed to researchers. When Vladimir Putin's spokesman Dmitry Peskov was moved to denounce so much disclosure of confidential diplomatic material, it became obvious that Sarotte was on to something. For this is the story of how successive Russian leaders were outmanoeuvred by more skilful politicians, notably the wily German chancellor Helmut Kohl and the American secretary of state James Baker.

The expansion of NATO has always been controversial. Russia resisted it with impotent ferocity from the start. A powerful strand of opinion in the US State Department has always believed that their sensitivities should have been accommodated. Russia is a big country with nuclear weapons. It has sat at Europe's top table since the 18th century. Those elder statesmen of American diplomacy Henry Kissinger and George Kennan thought it the height of folly to humiliate her in her moment of weakness. They were also worried about the risks of extending the American nuclear guarantee to unstable countries on Russia's borders with ancient issues with their larger neighbour. In 1997, Kennan took to the pages of the *New York Times* to denounce 'the most fateful error of American policy in the entire post-Cold War era'. Sarotte's judgment is more cautious, but her instinct is much the same.

In spite of persistent Russian suspicions, there was no western master plan. American policy was essentially opportunistic, advancing in halting steps as chance opened doors in front of them. With some 340,000 soldiers in East Germany and a cast-iron right of occupation under the four-power agreements of 1945, Mikhail Gorbachev and Boris Yeltsin were in a strong position to resist German unification and the expansion of NATO which followed. At one time it looked as if the West would have to pay a high price for their consent. Russia pressed for German

By the time he retired, Yeltsin had reconciled himself to the migration of Russia's Warsaw Pact allies to NATO. He had even toyed with the idea of applying for Russian membership. But Ukraine and the three Baltic republics were sticking points. Ukraine (the word means 'border region') was a particularly sensitive issue. It had been joined to Russia for a millennium. Much of the Soviet nuclear arsenal was stationed there. The Russian Black Sea fleet was based at Sevastopol in the Crimea. When Yeltsin destroyed the Soviet Union by taking Russia out of it, he did not reckon on losing Ukraine. Yet, in a referendum in 1991, the Ukrainians voted by a large majority to go their own way. The American ambassador in Moscow, Robert Strauss, a savvy newcomer to

succeeded Yeltsin in 2000. It did happen, but too late, when Putin Moscow, who would be much more dangerous. It nearly happened in August 1991. It was removed and replaced by hardliners in

Was Nato expansion worth the risk of enduring Russian resentment and hostility? The answer is: probably

American policy grew more ambitious as the enormity of the Russian collapse became apparent. The end of the Warsaw Pact was followed by the disintegration of the Soviet Union itself, as it split into 15 separate states, its allies abandoned it, and a once great power subsided into bankruptcy and organised crime. Russia did not have to be bought off after all. The only constraint on American policy now was the fear that if Gorbachev and Yeltsin were pressed too far they would

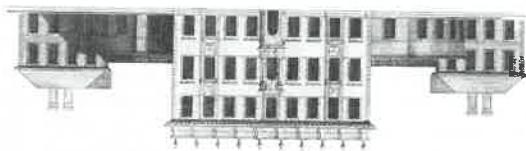
neutrality, something which would probably have destroyed NATO and put an end to the American commitment to European defence. The German foreign minister Hans-Dietrich Genscher seemed willing to concede it. Baker and Kohl were not, but they were prepared to promise that NATO would stay within its current boundaries. 'Not one inch eastward from its present position' was what Baker told Gorbachev in February 1990. The exchange fell well short of an agreement, but Russian governments never forgot it.

international politics, saw the implications at once and reported: The most revolutionary event of 1991 for Russia may not be the collapse of communism but the loss of something Russians of all political stripes think of as part of their own body politic and near to the heart at that: Ukraine. The Baltics eventually became members of both the European Union and NATO. But to this day neither organisation has dared to welcome Ukraine. At nearly every page of this outstanding book one comes back to the same question. Was NATO expansion worth the risk of enduring Russian resentment and hostility? The answer is: probably. The Kennan/Kissinger view assumes that an unpromised Russia would have been more benign, and this seems unlikely. Russia has been a predatory autocracy for three centuries. It has always had a strong sense of entitlement in eastern Europe. It grabbed Poland and the Baltic states in the 18th century. It brutally suppressed successive risings in 19th-century Poland. It posed as the protector of the Slav regions of south-eastern Europe throughout the 19th and 20th centuries. It was constantly beating at the gates of Ottoman Turkey. It conquered all of eastern and central Europe in 1944-5 and imposed satellite communist regimes on them for the next 50 years. When, in a now notorious essay written at the end of last year, Putin invoked the ghost of the expansionary 18th-century Tsarina Catherine the Great, he was asserting Russia's inherited rights over eastern Europe. This fantasy no doubt derived its intensity from the humiliations of the 1990s, but it had much older and more fundamental origins. It would not have gone away, however Russia had been handled after 1989. 'Great empires do not go gracefully into oblivion,' observed the ever shrewd Strauss from the Moscow embassy. More cautious statesmen than George Bush and Bill Clinton might have rejected the pleas of the central European states for NATO membership. But it would have been a grotesque essay in great power politics to condemn a third of Europe to indefinite Russian domination. It is what the wartime allies did at Tehran in 1943 and Yalta in 1945. But there was no alternative then, whereas the West had a choice after 1989. The consequences of leaving former Russian satellites at the mercy of their old master became painfully clear in the next three decades. Those which had no NATO guarantee foundered. Chechnya was reconquered. Georgia was dismembered. Belarus was bribed, and its democracy 'managed' out of existence. The Crimea was annexed. Ukraine is now engaged in a desperate struggle for survival in the face of Russian brute force. 'To hell with that,' Bush replied when the risks of extending NATO's reach were pointed out to him. It may have been the wisest judgment.



*"The most dignified and beautiful
literary festival on the planet"*

Alain de Botton



CLIVEDEN LITERARY FESTIVAL

15th - 16th October 2022

An unrivalled array of speakers, including:

Sam Leith	Jonathan Haslam	Mikhail Zygare	Yana Sofovich	Alindrea Emelife	Antonia Romeo	Luke Johnson	Albert Read	Octavius Black	Simon Heffer	Andrea Elliott	Lucasta Miller	Alice Thomson	Carmilla Tominney	Roy Foster	Wyre Davies
Peter Frankopan	Edward Enninfu	William Boyd	Robert Harris	William Dalrymple	Clarissa Ward	Sebastian Barry	HM King Simeon	of the Bulgarians	Abi Morgan	Serhii Plokhyy	Olesya Khromeychuk	Louise Perry	Howard Jacobson	Tina Brown	Ben Okri
Jonathan Freedland	Kate Mosse	Jessie Burton	Mark Galeotti	Julia Samuel	Merve Emre	David Nott	Chris Evans	Jonathan Bate	Susie Boyt	Susan Jonusas	Katy Hessel	Radek Sikorski	Yana Peel	Flora Yukhnovich	Michael Gove
Andrea Marcolongo	Nicholas Cullinan	Inaya Polarin Iman	Jake Wallis Simons	Daisy Dunn	Nadhim Zahawi	Robert Hardman	Wesley Kerr								

and our founders, Natalie Livingstone, Simon Sebag Montefiore, Catherine Ostler and Andrew Roberts.

For full details and to book tickets visit www.clivedenliteraryfestival.org
Email: info@clivedenliteraryfestival.org Call: +44 (0)20 3488 3401
@ClivedenLitFest #ClivedenLitFest



Sponsored by
Citi Private Bank



In partnership with
National Trust



Supported by
JOHN SANDOE BOOKS



In association with
TATLER

An empire crumbles

Boyd Tonkin

Nights of Plague

by Orhan Pamuk,
translated by Ekin Oklap
Faber, £20, pp. 704

Welcome to Mingheria, 'pearl of the Levant'. On a spring day, as the 20th century dawns,

you disembark at this 'calm and charming island' south of Rhodes from a comfortable steamer after sailing from Smyrna, Piraeus or Alexandria. A crew of Greek or Muslim boatmen will row you to the picturesque harbour of Arkaz, flanked by the radiant White Mountain and the gloomy turrets of the medieval castle.

The fragrances of honeysuckle, linden

trees and the famous Mingherian roses wait over azure seas. Admire the ancient churches and newer mosques, the neo-classical State Hall, the grand buildings funded by the sultan's government in faraway Istanbul. Savour figs, oil, nuts and cheeses in the bustling markets. As for those rumours of banditry by Orthodox or Islamist renegades in the bare hills: miscellaneous title-tattle. Infection? You'll find no disease here...

Orhan Pamuk began writing his tenth novel in 2016. In 2020, reality caught up with Turkey's Nobel laureate. *Nights of Plague* chronicles eight months of pestilence, lockdown and dread on a fictitious Aegean island. In 1901, an outbreak of plague scourges its people – equal numbers of Christians and Muslims – while the tottering, panicky Ottoman state loses its grip.

In his novels of Istanbul past and present, Pamuk relishes meticulous, immersive world-building. He remakes the city street by street, smell by smell, brick by brick. Over 700 pages, he does the same for imaginary Mingheria. His dream island hosts a 'three-dimensional fairy tale' – the backdrop for a densely crosshatched parable not just of an epidemic and its outcomes but nationalism, modernity and group identity. Along the way, he uncovers 'mysterious links... between history and objects, and nations and writing'.

Pamuk frames his journal of a plague year as a narrative compiled by a modern historian from letters written by Princess Pakize. She is the invented daughter of the actual Ottoman Sultan Murad V, who in 1876 was deposed and confined to palace arrest by his reformist but authoritarian brother Abdul Hamid II. Raised in a gilded cage, Pakize finds liberation of a sort in marriage to the progressive 'doctor and prince consort' Nuri. After the murder on Mingheria of the Ottoman public health chief, Bonkowski Pasha, Nuri and Pakize are dispatched there. They must hunt down the culprits and battle a galloping epidemic that the enfeebled empire wants to deny.

Back in Istanbul, Abdul Hamid devours detective stories (as he really did). Rebel

provinces break away; the imperial map 'continues to shrink'. On Mingheria, meanwhile, 'Sherlock Holmes methods' and scientific epidemiology vie with cruder investigative measures (arbitrary detention, mass isolation, foot-flogging and incineration). New brain and old brawn compete in the search both for Bonkowski's shadowy killers and the sources of the plague.

Stricken Mingheria becomes a microcosm of the Ottoman twilight. As the death toll mounts, the island's amiable, conciliatory governor Sami Pasha – with his twin-dialled pocket watch that tells the time in both western and Ottoman fashions – sees authority slip away. Well-off Greeks flee. Wary Muslims, inflamed by sectarians, revolt against lockdown. 'Nobody ever wants a quarantine. From the lodges of 'charlatan sheikhs' to dank cells where victims of 'chief scrutiniser' Mazhar Effendi shiver, Pamuk crams his Mingherian map with precise, almost obsessive detail. It thickens the texture but slows the pace. Ekin Oklap's cleverly voiced translation captures our historian's fussy pedantic, sometimes tortoise-footed, story-telling. Go with its leisurely flow, however, and the island saga can exert the hypnotic pull of those historical soaps Turkish TV does so well.

In this 'time of anarchy', unrest boils over into insurrection, both religious and secular. The rise of Mingherian 'romantic nationalism', fronted by the dashing Major Kamil, lets Pamuk fire off sly barbed darts at the official Turkish cult of Atatürk. On the reborn island, mystique of a holy nation and its unique language makes the affirmation of Mingherian identity 'as sacred as an act of prayer'.

Soon 'nationalist fervour blurs the lines between... myth and reality'. Mingheria becomes an island of ideas, twinned with the grotesque progress of the pestilence as faith and science tussle: the sheikhs' 'esoteric knowledge' on one hand, 'microbes and Lyso!' on the other. Palace coups and popular uprisings multiply as the plague summer repeats, at speed and in miniature, the history of revolutionary epochs. A late twist thrusts the princess and her doctor husband into the spotlight. On this 'stage of world history', Pakize will not waste her privileged life 'standing in a corner like a faded rose'.

As it pivots between saga and satire, mystery and pseudo-history, *Nights of Plague* can feel as overloaded as an Arkaz boat-



'Thank heaven life can at last return to normal.'

man's caïque. Pamuk, though, shows nous, charm and cunning as he keeps his bulky cargo afloat and on the move. If this genres hybrid of epidemic soap opera and novel of ideas has becalmed patches, it stirs the senses and flexes the mind. You will be sad to leave lavishly imagined Mingheria, where 'a view of the sea and a trace of its scent' can always 'make life seem worth living again'.

A complicated bond

Chloe Ashby

The Best of Friends

by Kamila Shamsie
Bloomsbury Circus, £18.99, pp. 336

When I think of Kamila Shamsie's *Home Five*, I picture a pot boiling on a hob, the water level rising until it spills over the lip and onto the stove. In *Best of Friends*, the author's seventh novel, the tension is still there, but the bubbles are contained. It's more of a simmer, gentle but insistent – not unlike the 'shared subtexts' that pass between the protagonists.

We first meet Maryam and Zahra as 14-year-olds. It's the summer of 1988 in Karachi and the two girls are preoccupied with standard teenage stuff (budding bodies, boys) and the kind of concerns that sadly become standard when living under a 'repellent dictator' (censored television, bomb and riot alarms, everyday violence). Maryam is wealthy, with a 'casual attitude to academics'. Zahra is hard-working and needs to gain a scholarship if she's to fulfil her dream of attending a top-tier university in Britain or America. The future looks bright when General Zia, who seized power in a military coup, dies, and a young woman, Benazir Bhutto, becomes prime minister. 'It feels like more things are possible in the world than I'd believed,' says Zahra. Excited by the prospect of something new, she makes a snap decision at a party celebrating a democratic Pakistan that puts the two friends in a compromising position and sees Maryam shipped off to boarding school.

Shamsie, who was raised in Karachi and lives in London, sticks with the 14-year-olds in Pakistan until this fateful night, which takes place almost halfway through the book. The narrative then skips forward to 2019. The pair are living in London – Maryam in Primrose Hill, Zahra in 'one of the unlovely stretches' north-west. And yet Zahra has made herself 'exactly what she'd wanted to be – someone'. Two back-to-back profiles reintroduce the characters: a pithy interview with Zahra, now head of the Centre for Civil Liberties, runs in the *Guardian*; another straighter interview with Maryam, a top venture capitalist, appears in *Tech Capital News*. In their forties, the women still have

their differences, but they remain best friends and get together every Sunday.

If you're worried that a novel about the longevity of childhood friendship sounds sentimental, don't be. Tangled up with Maryam and Zahra's relationship are questions of responsibility, justice, power and ethics. When Maryam joins an elite donor club that's shamelessly pumping money into the UK government and which stands for everything Zahra has 'spent her professional life fighting', their faith in one another is tested. Life in London may seem simple compared with Karachi, but politics is politics.

As Zahra tells the *Guardian*:

The British are too complacent that their democracy is so robust it can't be weakened – things that would set off alarm bells in countries with histories of authoritarian rule are allowed to slide by with little noise here.

It's the deep-rooted and complicated bond between the two women that keeps us turning the pages. Shamisie explores the changing nature of friendship, the way it consumes you when you're young and later becomes about 'being there' when it matters. Also, the way it clouds your judgment. Zara reflects:

The problem with childhood friendship was that you could sometimes fail to see the adult in front of you because you had such a fixed idea of the teenager she once was, and other times you were unable to see the teenager still alive and kicking within the adult.

Alive and kicking beneath the surface. Simmering gently.

Death in Rome

Lucasta Miller

Written in Water:

Keats's Final Journey

by Alessandro Gallenzi

Alma Books, £16.99, pp. 320

On Sunday 17 September 1820, John Keats and his travelling companion, the young painter Joseph Severn, set sail for Italy, where it was hoped that the warmer climate would benefit the poet's failing health. It didn't. He died of tuberculosis in Rome the following February at the age of only 25.

The last five months of Keats's life – the sea voyage to Naples, including ten exhausting days stuck in the bay in quarantine; the overland journey to Rome; his last weeks spent in the rooms above the Spanish Steps that are now a museum – are the focus of this enthralling and original new study. Its author, Alessandro Gallenzi, the publisher of Alma Books, is well acquainted with Keats's letters, having recently translated them into Italian. That experience revealed to him that the last phase of Keats's much told story has been the least well documented to date.

Odd tangents add unexpected colour and at him 150 years on?

quicks of history: 'Who knows if this man have imagined that we would be starting back on the last leg of their journey to Rome, Severn and Keats witnessed the bizarre sight of a cardinal shooting small birds in his voluminous scarlet cloak, attracting his prey by brandishing an owl loosely tied to a stick along with a small mirror. Gallenzi explains skylarks and, amazingly, even tracks down that this was the traditional method of hunting

He fleshes out the family history of one of the only two other passengers en route for Naples: the teenage Maria Cotterell, who, like Keats, was already far gone with consumption and who was fated to die not long after him. We learn that her brother, who met her off the boat in Naples, where he struck up a brief, friendly acquaintance with Keats and Severn, lived for another 50 years, ultimately emigrating to New Zealand. Looking at his photograph, Gallenzi is full of wonder at the quirks of history: 'Who knows if this man who shook hands with Keats... would ever have imagined that we would be starting back at him 150 years on?'

The value of the book lies in its author's passion for chasing up previously unexplored details. Use of contemporary public sources, for example, allows him to pinpoint the exact time of day (shortly after 9 a.m.) and weather (cloudy and around 12 degrees C) at the moment the *Maria Crowther*, a merchant-man, weighed anchor on the Thames near the Tower of London with Keats and Severn on board (he is not able to determine the exact wharf from which it sailed).

There is little doubt that Keats knew he was terminally ill before he set off. A trained medic, he had no illusions following his first blood-spitting incident in February 1820, which he called his 'death warrant'. So it's interesting to discover that the passport issued to him puts England as his final destination, as does the police certificate locally required for his passage to Naples. Was there some bureaucratic reason for foreigners to cite their home-country, or was Keats in fact hoping to win-ter in Rome before going home to die, nursed by Fanny Brune and her mother? Gallenzi shows us how even affectless official documents can offer moving and important new biographical insights.

Keats wrote no poetry in this period and his own unmediated voice falls silent after 30 November, when he pens his last ever letter, addressed to his friend Charles Brown and containing his poignant envoi: 'I always made an awkward bow.' But Severn's on-the-spot correspondence offers a harrowing running commentary on his decline. It was to Severn that Keats dictated his own epitaph, 'Here lies one whose name was writ in water', from which Gallenzi adapts his title.

His decision to focus on these last months intensifies our apprehension of the grotesque physical suffering and bitter mental anguish Keats went through in his final weeks, espe-



Ink wash by Joseph Severn of Keats on his deathbed

BRIDGEMAN IMAGES

Only one half of the story

Francesca Peacock

The Book of Goose

by Yiyun Li
Fourth Estate, £16.99, pp. 348

As introductions go, 'My name is Agnès, but that is not important' does not have quite the same confidence as 'Call me Ishmael'. But there's a reason for this. Agnès Moreau, the narrator of Yiyun Li's *Book of Goose*, only became a storyteller by accident.

Writing from Pennsylvania, where the 'French bride' Agnès raises geese, she remembers post-war rural France and her childhood in Saint Rémy. She and her friend Fabienne, avoiding other girls their age, spent their days lying among gravestones and minding cows – until Fabienne decides that they should write a book together.

Fabienne's stories are dark – dead babies, dead children, dead animals – and the girls enlist the help of the local postmaster, M. Deveaux, to publish the volume. This is where Agnès's accidental authorship comes in: the work appears with only her name on it, and it is she who must endure the undeserved fame of child prodigy. Press attention, a sojourn at an English boarding school and the gradual disintegration of the girls' friendship follow.

The Book of Goose begins with the revelation that Fabienne has died in childbirth – 'the same manner as her sister' – and Agnès spends much of the time railing against the fact that 'half of this story is [Fabienne's], but she is not here to tell me what I have missed'.

This conceit – a book in which one of the central characters is dead – is not new to Yiyun Li. *Where Reasons End* (2019) was a conversation between a mother and her son who has committed suicide, and *Must I Go* (2020) followed a woman as she obsessively rereads her dead lover's diaries. But *The Book of Goose* is subtly different. Li is continually questioning what it means to be one of a pair, a half of a whole, a duo, even before one person has died. Despite what Agnès believed when she was younger, the girls could never be 'two bodies in one'.

This is a novel of deceptions and cruelty. Agnès is a 'faux prodigy', her 'big dreams' can never materialise and her life is stalked by tragedy. But within this sombre mood is something brilliant. With characteristic poise, Li depicts the intricacies of ordinary lives: childhood friendship, growing up, and geese Agnès watches. 'Any experience is experience, any life a life', writes Li. When it's this well told, it's impossible not to agree.

mishes over his inclusion in the Venice Biennale, his ratcheting anxiety and irritation about what to include/exclude almost burning off the page.

How much this volume adds to the several biographies already written depends on how primary you like your sources to be. The raw spontaneity and energy of each illustrated page conveys Freud's moods and preoccupations in a way that no biographer can match. Yet the narrative is necessarily patchy, following those letters that survive, thanks to the vagaries of fortune, where others have perished or disappeared.

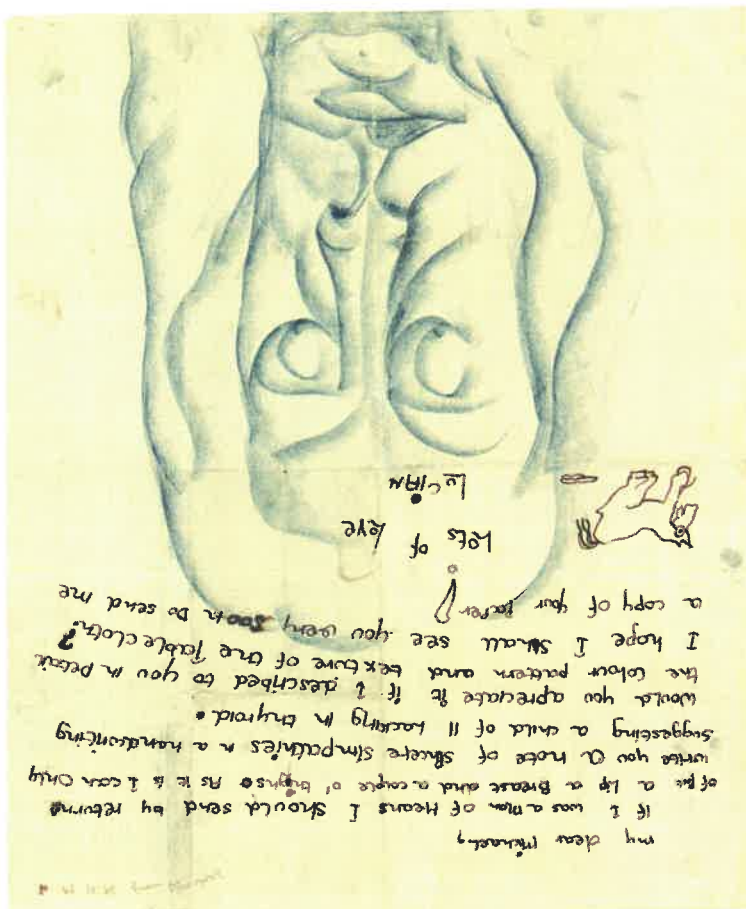
But the calm clarity of the commentary spins it all together, and many of the letters included here have never been seen before. In editing this volume, Martin Gayford (a friend, and the subject of 'Man with a Blue Scar') and Freud's longtime assistant David Dawson never intrude. Yet their closeness to the painter, allied with keen research, throw light on frequent obscurity, and they complement Freud's words and artworks with rarely seen photographs. Altogether, this is as vivid a Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man as we shall ever have, and compelling reading for Freud aficionados and amateur psychologists alike.

On he went carousing, reporting back to Ann Fleming on a high-society fancy dress ball in Biarritz. She was among his favourite correspondents, though predictably he loathed her new husband Ian. 'He wasn't nasty, he was ghastly', he didn't have friends, he had golfing friends.' The volume ends with Freud's second marriage, to Caroline Blackwood, and the many skit-

gists alike. Love affairs and a first marriage soared and crashed, law suits threatened and debts accumulated. Freud's career progressed in fits and starts but never fast enough to fund the gambling, and his letters to various patrons are among his most self-aware. Admonished for his spendthrift ways, he admits that 'the wolves and their needs are created entirely by my tastes and feelings, but it is through my tastes and feelings that I live as a painter and as a person'.

Love affairs and a first marriage soared and crashed, law suits threatened and debts accumulated. Freud's career progressed in fits and starts but never fast enough to fund the gambling, and his letters to various patrons are among his most self-aware. Admonished for his spendthrift ways, he admits that 'the wolves and their needs are created entirely by my tastes and feelings, but it is through my tastes and feelings that I live as a painter and as a person'.

Letter to Michael Nelson, first half of 1940



PRIVATE COLLECTION THE LUCIAN FREUD ARCHIVE. ALL RIGHTS RESERVED 2022. BRIDGEMAN IMAGES



HAVE A GRAND TIME IN GRAN CANARIA

The island's natural beauty, historical attractions and delectable cuisine lend themselves to a luxury twin-centre break
By Erica Bush



From the sand dunes of Maspalomas and volcanic pools of Salinas de Agaña to the stunning historic quarter and epic culinary offering of the capital city Las Palmas de Gran Canaria — the options are endless on this sun-soaked island paradise.

And it's this variety of experiences that makes Gran Canaria the perfect twin-centre option for travellers seeking a fun-filled city break and a high-end beach holiday wrapped into one trip.

Endless choice and authentic experiences.

So diverse is this beautiful island that it is often referred to as a 'miniature continent', with plenty of activity options, a bounty of high-end hotels and stunning scenery at every turn.

A perfect twin-centre luxury escape could include the Gran Luxury Santa Catalina. A Royal Hideaway Hotel, in Las Palmas de Gran Canaria. Part of the Barcelo group and home to an outstanding Michelin-starred restaurant, this stunning property

is the perfect base from which to explore the capital's charming historical quarter, the gastronomic delights of Vegueta and Puerto markets and the beautiful golden sand Las Canteras beach.

Combine the capital with a visit to the north of the island, home to banana plantations, authentic haciendas such as La Rekompensa and highly regarded wineries.

Visit the Finca La Laja and Los Berrazales winery in the Agaete Valley. This 200-year-old farm produces its own wine, oranges, coffee and avocados, and is one of the island's best-kept secrets. And do not miss Areucas Rom Distillery, holding the title of Purveyors to the Royal House and Court of Spain from 1885. Honey rum is Gran Canaria's speciality.

As you cross the island from north to south, opt for a scenic drive to Tejeda and the magnificent central massif of Gran Canaria. This winding road trip is a must.

passing pretty villages and archaeological sites highlighting the island's pre-Hispanic heritage, eventually reaching the summit

for sweeping volcanic views. Stop for lunch in Parador Cruz de Tejeda, renowned for its gastronomy based on local recipes with the modern twist. Marking the geographical centre of the island. The Parador offers breathtaking panoramic views. Here, at almost 2,000m above sea level, you'll quickly see why Unesco has declared half of the island a Biosphere Reserve.

On arriving in the south, head to the Gran Luxury Seaside Grand Hotel Residencia, a Leading Hotel of the World member. This hidden gem with impeccable gardens and superb service is a haven for relaxation by the magnificent Maspalomas Dunes and its 1,000-year-old palm tree grove. And the beautiful Meloneras promenade along the ocean front with stylish bars, restaurants and boutiques is within the walking distance.

In Gran Canaria, the offering is so diverse, you'll want to return for more!

www.grancanaria.com

Opera

More depravity, please

Richard Bratby

Salome
Royal Opera House, until 1 October

La Princesse de Trébizonde
Queen Elizabeth Hall

The first night of the new season at Covent Garden was cancelled when the solemn news came through. The second opened with a short, respectful speech from Oliver Mears, the director of opera, and a minute's silence in which the houselights were lowered and we could gaze at the curtains, from which the huge gold-embroidered EILK cypher had already been removed. For the first time in King Charles's reign, we sang the national anthem to unfamiliar new words. There were shouts of 'God Save the King!' And then the lights dimmed once more and we proceeded with the business of the evening, and the life of the Royal Opera.

Britain has never had a Court Opera in the continental sense, and that's a good thing, sparing us the epic pomposity that distinguishes so many European artistic institutions, and which was imported wholesale by the United States (expect a British orchestra to address you as 'Maestro' and you'll be laughed off

If a staging of Salome operates within an audience's ethical comfort zone, it's doing something wrong

The relationship between the opera and British royalty has always been more light touch. Arriving late at Covent Garden one afternoon, I was ushered, temporarily, into the vacant royal box. The sighs were execrable, surely the worst in the house, with barely a third of the stage visible. That, presumably, is what Her late Majesty tolerated, uncomplaining, for all those years. Anyway, the show went on, and if it's difficult to think of a less appropriate opera for such a grave occasion than Richard Strauss's *Salome*, it's also hard to think of many circumstances in which *Salome* would ever be appropriate. That's kind of the point: it's blasphemous, it's depraved, and the Vienna Court Opera banned it outright until after the fall of the Habsburg monarchy, when nothing in Austria really mattered any more. This is the fourth revival of David McVicar's 2008 production, and in the hands of revival director Barbara Lulich it looks spotless, with a sickly greenish light illuminating the corridors beneath Herod's pleasure palace. We glimpse only a corner of the decadence above stairs, where the Tetrarch appears to be hosting a distinctly Bunnellish dinner party. Visually, then, it's an uncomplicated

In the pic, meanwhile, Alexander Soddys conducts an expressionist reading of Strauss's score: Schiele rather than Klimt, with probing strings and great baleful blocks of horn tone. It's taut, it doesn't linger, and Soddy winkles out the awkward angles and dirty little corners of Strauss's orchestral mosaic – grunting contrabassoon, sly bass clarinet and shrilling, phosphorescent high woodwinds. The climactic dissonance felt rotten to the bone, as a near-possessed Salome fondled the oozing head of the slaughtered prophet. How different, how very different, from the home life of our own dear Queen.

At the South Bank, Paul Daniel conducted the London Philharmonic in a concert performance of Offenbach's comedy *La Princesse de Trébizonde*: an underrated conductor reviving an almost forgotten score with quite irresistible affection and flair. It's daff as a brush (Girl pretends to be waxwork; Prince falls in love with waxwork; can-cans ensue) but Offenbach's melodies sparkle like dew, even with the spoken dialogue (a crucial component of the opera-bouffe mix) stripped out and replaced with a narration (Hartlett Walters, Virginie Verrez glowing in the trouser role of Prince Raphael and Anne-Catherine Gillet bounced off the walls as the coquette Zanetta. The whole soufflé was recorded for release by Opera Rara, and it's gone straight on to my wish list.

For much of the time she might as well have been carrying a banana as a shotgun

shooting people around the hotel pool while she was on her balcony. Given the strange parallel world in which TV drama takes place, all that we could be sure about at this stage was that the gunmen wouldn't be jihadists. Whoever they were, though, Jo didn't hesitate. Instead, in further proof that we were in TV-drama world, this fortysomething woman grabbed a shotgun from the manager's office and ran around in search of the killers.

Once they'd invaded the hotel, the tension was cranked up with great effectiveness – mainly by having isolated individuals from the three central families fleeing terrified through empty corridors and pressing frantically on lift buttons. It also added to the genuine scariness that not all of them made it. Meanwhile, the identity of the gunmen was revealed. They were, it turned out, two local teenage boys who'd been sacked from the hotel for stealing and opted to respond by slaughtering its guests. Had this been the actual *Die Hard*, then, it would have made for quite a short film, with Bruce Willis taking them out in seconds. Here it meant that fused youngsters deservingly of some sympathy. For much of the time, in fact, she might as well have been carrying a banana as a

Crossfire was a three-part drama in more ways than one. Running every night from Tuesday to Thursday, it brought together a *Die Hard*-style thriller, an exploration of the complexities of family life (with particular reference to middle-aged womanhood) and a meditation on the nature of time. Odder still, it worked pretty well on the whole – though it was not without moments of frank implausibility.

Keeley Hawes played Jo, whose decision to book a holiday in the Canary Islands for her family and two others seemed a good idea at the time. Granted, her marriage wasn't in top shape, what with her habit of falling for any man who paid her more attention than her husband did (making it not her fault really). Nonetheless, give or take one public row and a spot of sexing with her latest attention-payer, the holiday began uneventfully enough. Until, that is, some gunmen started

Television

Bang goes nothing

James Walton

Crossfire
BBC1

Michael Palin: Into Iraq
Channel 5

shotgun, so reluctant was she to use it. But that was before one of the boys threatened her daughter...

And yet, whole-heartedly presented though it was, the hotel shooting seemed less like the show's chief focus and more like a cunningly telegenic illustration of what it was most interested in: the way that trauma rewrites not just families' ideas of the future but also how they come to see the past. Indeed, the final episode, set largely after the survivors had returned home, might well have been the strongest – not least because it gave dramatic form to the abstract thoughts on time standing still vs time rolling on that had up till now been restricted to Jo's intermittent and somewhat portentous voice-over. She also received full forgiveness for her flirty ways from her teenage daughter – which, while perhaps as much a middle-aged female fantasy as being a kick-ass heroine, felt unmistakably and rather movingly like the programme's real climax.

To its credit, Channel 5 has become the TV equivalent of old-school Radio 2: a place where venerable refugees from other channels – Michael Portillo, Pam Ayres, *All Creatures Great and Small* – are warmly welcomed into a new home without being obliged to change much. And sure enough, *Michael Palin: Into Iraq* sees our man still having bureaucratic trouble at border cross-

Channel 5 has become the TV equivalent of old-school Radio 2

ings, still tucking into the local food with relish and, above all, still exuding benevolent curiosity wherever he goes.

His plan for this three-part series is to follow the Tigris for 1,000 miles through the whole length of Iraq – which serves as a chastening reminder that our current pride in Britain's long history wouldn't cut much ice in Mesopotamia, where all the towns he's visited so far are thousands of years old.

In Tuesday's opening episode, one of them was Mosul – occupied by Isis for four years and liberated with extreme prejudice by the Allies – where, amid the ruins, he had to work hard to hang on to his trademark cheerfulness. ('I'm feeling inspired by the people I met,' he eventually managed.) Luckily, after that, he hung out in some luxury in Erbil, the capital of Kurdish Iraq, and as a big finish climbed a large mountain to witness the celebrations for the Kurdish new year, which combined a torchlight procession with a lot of happy gunfire. ('Noise is important to Kurdish people,' a local explained.)

At the beginning on Tuesday, Palin told us that since we last saw him he's had a serious heart operation. The good news is that, judging from this warm and gently informative programme, he must have had a great surgeon.

her daughter...

Exhibitions

A frantic collector of views

Laura Gascoigne

Edward Lear: Moment to Moment
Ikon Gallery, until 13 November

'It seems to me that I have to choose between 2 extremes of affection for nature... English, or Southern... The latter – olive – vine – flowers... warmth & light, better health – the other side are, in England, cold, damp & dullness, – constant hurry & hustle – cessation from all varied topographical interest, that choice was effectively made for Edward Lear in 1837 when he gave up the natural history studies by which he had made his name in his teens and headed south to Rome on doctors' advice, aged 24. Prone to asthma and epileptic seizures, the myopic artist was now also suffering from eyestrain. 'My eyes are so sadly worse,' he wrote to a fellow ornithologist the year before, 'that no bird under an Ostrich shall I soon be able to do.'

Having plumped for a career as a 'dirty Landscape painter', Lear fell into a lifelong pattern of wintering around the Mediterranean.

Never quite at home in the circles he moved in, Lear greeted landscapes as warmly as old friends

Not many people think of the author of 'The Owl and the Pussycat' as an artist, but it was as an artist that he thought of himself. Self-confessedly 'half-educated' – he lasted a year at school, which he hated – he began drawing 'for bread and cheese' in his teens, teaching himself from his sisters' ladies' drawing manuals. Having caught the travel bug, he became a frantic collector of views – in a 50-year career he amassed 9,000 sketches, some providing reference

mean and summering in England, dashing families with nonsense songs. His love of birds remained, but the landscape took over. 'O sugar canes! O camels! O Egypt! he hailed the Nile in 1867; 'O wind! O cold! O stones! O sand!' he scribbled under a drawing of Savona. His pencilled notes are peppered with exclamations. Lonely, depressive, never quite at home in the circles he moved in, he greeted landscapes as warmly as old friends. 'The Elements





Santa Maura Fortress from the West, 6.00 p.m., 19 April 1863, by Edward Lear

The washes run riot, the melancholy beauty of this pine-clothed mountain pass provoking a fit of sketching

they really are and not calling to my aid, bro- ken pillars, upset capitals, immense gourds, & 15 Ladies in pink and yellow satin play- ing on Guitars'. His landscapes are mostly penquin-like creature seems to have strayed from one of his nonsense illustrations into

'Opposite Calvi' (1868) – 'a dantesque female', says a pencil note. He did occasion- ally indulge in what he called 'phibbing'. A little sketch of 'Santa Maura' (1863) has the freshness of on-the-spot colouring, but Lear's usual practice was to add wash-

es from notes and memory in the evenings. He is as free with his watercolour washes as from notes and memory in the evenings. His chiaroscuro is essentially made up. He is as free with his watercolour washes

as he is careful with his line; their refus- al to conform to strict tonal logic rescues his landscapes from the realm of plodding topography and spirits them across the bor- der to dreamland. In two iridescent sketches of 'The Forest of Bavella, Corsica' (1868) (see p31) at sunrise, the washes run riot, the melancholy beauty of this pine-clothed mountain pass provoking a fit of sketch- ing. 'No frenzy of the wildest dreams of a landscape painter could shape out ideal scenes of more magnificence or wonder,' he gushed. In two days he produced more than 300 drawings.

Artists are formed by their weaknesses as much as by their strengths. Not having gone through the mill of academic training, Lear never really mastered tonal modelling. His hills have horizon lines but lack con- tours; they're flat transcriptions brought to life with light. Unlike the tourist views of David Roberts, Lear's 'poetical-topograph-

for later paintings but most merely scratch- ing the itch to capture the moment. When a fellow traveller suggested accompany- ing him on an outing, he was warned off by Lear's faithful servant Giorgio, who com- pared his master to a hunting dog. He would prow around a subject, catching it from dif- ferent angles and in different lights, regis- tering the creep of shadows as the sun rose and set. Drawing in pencil to go over later in ink and wash made him very quick.

The 60 sketches in the Ikon Gallery's new exhibition, the first to focus on Lear's land- scapes, include four views of the Egyptian temple of Maharraka, five of Amada and four of Dendera, timed at intervals as short as five minutes. Three views of 'Mount Ida, Crete' (1864) were captured from a passing steamer. There's no trace of a wobble; Lear had a rock-steady hand and an idiot savant's ability to transcribe topographical detail on to a page. He took pride in placing things 'as

Pop

Force of nature

Michael Hann

A.A. Williams

Queen Elizabeth Hall, and touring until 18 November

Nathy Peluso

O2 Shepherd's Bush Empire

Few forms of music have colonised the world like metal and hip-hop. Wherever you go you will find these two alchemising with local genres. A few years back, I took a trip to Kathmandu to visit a Nepali festival, where I saw bands from all over south Asia blasting through the beats, and in the streets outside the cabs threaded past with hip-hop blaring out of open windows. Both still represent youth in a way that lots of pop and rock no longer does. Hip-hop is simply the lingua franca of popular culture for anyone under 40; metal is still the most potent symbol of rebellion music has to offer – no matter that the rebellion is usually carefully packaged into a set of signifiers designed to tick adolescent boxes. But they are also omnipresent because both are malleable. They can be twisted into any shape, which

Her songs stay at the place where the waves crash over you without knocking you off your feet

means they do not sit still. Whereas a band playing Americana today will sound very much like an Americana band from 1980, the chances are that someone playing metal today will sound very little like a metal band from 1980.

Take A.A. Williams. She's signed to Bella Union, the label founded by Simon Raymonde, once of beloved 1980s ether-alists the Cocteau Twins, which specialises in woody sounding music of the kind often made by men with ragged beards and plaid shirts. But she also gets reviewed in *Kerrang!* and *Metal Hammer*. She makes heavy music that has indisputably come out of metal, but also exists somewhere between planes. There's a good bit of post-rock in there, hints of the music that has become known as post-classical, and, in her pure, clean voice, bits of folk, even.

At a disappointingly undersold Q&A, Williams and her band were breath-taking. It's not that she was skipping between styles with dizzying ease – she played her forthcoming album *As the Moon Rests* in its entirety, then three encores – but that the cumulative power of it was both awesome and beautiful. One might note that pretty much everything across *As the Moon Rests* and its predecessor *Forever Blue* sounds

After the war, sailing for Palestine, she's nearly killed by British sailors who board her vessel and brutalise the passengers. A teenage lad, who had escaped from a concentration camp, is shot dead by a British bullet. Years later, Rose emigrates to America and by a freakish accident she notices an elderly man with a glass eye and a number tattooed on his arm. Is this Yussuf? Almost certainly. But she won't tell us whether she introduced herself or not. The beauty of this exquisite piece lies in its evasions and silences. The voids and shadows speak louder than the clear bold outlines. One hesitates to call a work a 'masterpiece' but this production aims for and fulfils that ambition.

The P Word focuses on the tribulations of the Pakistani gay community. We meet Zafar, a textile worker in Lahore, who starts an affair with a married man. His lover is murdered by a homophobic gang and Zafar flees to Britain. His life is saved. But rather than celebrating his good fortune he sinks into surly resentment. He dislikes his cheap digs in Hounslow and he complains that his benefit payments are insufficient to cover his personal-grooming budget. As a textile worker, he expects to dazzle west London with the latest men's fashions. He befriends a gay Pakistani, Bilal, who has a trendy job in advertising but can't get promoted because his bosses are white supremacists.

Zafar's case is heard by a nasty immigration officer who asks him to parade up and down the room. A note is recorded in his file: 'Doesn't walk like a gay.' Zafar is then told to take snaps of himself at a Pride march to prove how gay he really is. Can any of this be true? It's hard to tell because the writer, Waleed Akhtar, is so anxious to find fault with Britain. He claims that the UK is responsible for the criminalisation of homosexuality in Pakistan (which has been independent since 1947). And his script ignores the killers of Zafar's lover even though Zafar knows who led the gang: his own father. The chances of prosecuting him appear to be nil but Zafar doesn't care about that.

And he gives the Islamic world a free pass too. He notes that one in 20 people are gay so there must be 100 million gay Muslims most of whom live in societies where it is difficult or illegal for them to express their sexuality. Yet he prays devoutly and encourages Bilal to observe the faith more closely and to embrace the traditions of his ancestral homeland. What a strange play. It celebrates the culture of Pakistan where gays are apparently murdered with impunity and it pillories the culture of Britain where those fleeing violence are accommodated and supported. But it's pointless to stage this show in multicultural west London because the problem isn't here. It's there. If the producers really want to change people's minds, they should transfer it to Lahore and see how that works out. What can be stopping them?

'Ial' landscapes have no substance. They don't promote sightseeing; they prompt reverie. 'I hardly enjoy any one thing on Earth while it is present,' he once confessed, hence the urgency of getting it down on paper. He invested everything in capturing the moment, enabling others to enjoy it for him.

Theatre

The sound of silence
Lloyd Evans

Rose

Park Theatre, until 15 October

The P Word

Bush Theatre, until 22 October

Look at this line. 'I'm 80 years old. I find that unforgettable.' Could an actor get a laugh on 'unforgettable'? Maureen Lipman does just that in *Rose*, by Martin Sherman, a monologue spoken by a Ukrainian Jew who lived through the horrors of the 20th century. In the opening sections, Lipman plays it like a professional comic and she fills the theatre with warm, loving laughter. Rose's dad is a hypochondriac who spends all day in bed. He never stopped dying but as far as we could tell there was nothing wrong with him. Eventually he loses his life when a wardrobe stuffed with pills topples on to him. 'He was crushed to death by medicine,' as a teenager, Rose witnesses a raid by Cossack horsemen but their savagery is relatively benign. 'They didn't try to harm us. They just smashed everything up.'

One hesitates to call a work a 'masterpiece' but this production aims for and fulfils that ambition

She gets through by accident. She's never at the centre of events but somehow she finds herself in the wrong place at the right time. She left for Poland in 1937 and dodged the Nazi genocide in Ukraine. In 1939, when the Germans arrived in Warsaw, she was unconcerned. 'It's someone else's war.' Having witnessed the violence of the Cossacks, she felt prepared for further mistreatment. 'How much worse could the Germans be...?' After that Lipman says nothing – and her silence contains the souls of six million people. Rose takes a job outside the Jewish quarter in a factory whose owner isn't anti-Semitic. One afternoon she spots flames rising from the ghetto but she isn't allowed to leave the building and protect her daughter, Esther. 'We had to go back to our machines.' It's not clear how the child died. Rose won't say. Or she can't. At the same time, she loses her

more or less the same – the songs are long, mournfully paced, and all occupy a similar windswept, gothic sonic place (it's a bit like someone reading *Withering Heights* to you through a megaphone). But Williams prefers melody to brute force (she has an astounding good voice, too), and understands the difference between using loudness to overwhelm and using it to overpower. Her songs never topple over into noise: they stay at the place where the waves crash over you without knocking you off your feet.

Her third album, when it arrives, will be the time when we discover whether there is more. One can create a career by running on the spot – just ask the Ramones, the greatest group in the history of recorded music – but Williams doesn't seem the kind of person who wants to keep churning out the same thing to ever-decreasing returns.

There was more of a party atmosphere over in west London on Sunday night, where London's Spanish speakers had turned out in force to greet Nathy Peluso, a young star of Latin hip-hop, over from Argentina (whose name makes me want to write Nancy Pelosi, every time). The young, largely female crowd cheered before she came on. They sang and rapped along to everything, and displayed their sexual fervour. Clearly, Peluso has a significant Sapphic following – bras

Peluso high kicked through the dry ice like the Terminator recast as a member of Pan's People

were thrown on stage, and the knees of one half of the young lesbian couple standing in front me literally buckled when Peluso related the head of a rose before throwing it out to the crowd. It's easier to pretend it's not the case but pop music is meant to be sexy, and Peluso places sex front and centre in her songs (I confess that my understanding of hip-hop vernacular in Spanish is not what it once was, but looking up her lyrics in translation suggests a great many of them are about eating, and not in the sense of getting your five a day. Some are less subtle: 'If I bend over, you can feel my clitoris,' she apparently offers in 'Sana Sana').

She was a force of nature, coming on in black leotard, leggings and sunglasses, punching the air and high kicking through the dry ice like the Terminator recast as a member of Pan's People. And she didn't stop. An hour later, she managed a burst of one-armed press-ups like some bonkers bloke in the pub who really, really wants to prove himself. ('Go on! Punch my stomach! Hard as you like! I won't feel a thing!') It was easy to get carried away with the joy-ous energy of it all, but the live show slightly altered the balance from her albums, going a good bit heavier on the Latin than the hip-hop. Though still a minority taste in the UK, South American pop is exploding across the

London Coliseum
3 November

Made in Leeds: Three Short Ballets

Leeds Playhouse, and touring until
3 November

Dance Make mine a triple Rupert Christiansen

so, that's a shame, because it's when she's spitting out the words and the beats are hard-est that Peluso seems most herself.

Good, better, best was the satisfying trajectory of Northern Ballet's terrific programme of three original short works, which moves south to the Linbury Studio at the Royal Opera House at the beginning of November. The company has a new director in the amiable Federico Bonelli, formerly a principal with the Royal Ballet, and he has several problems to address, not least the shortage of richly characterful dancers among the senior ranks. But this triple bill should boost everyone's morale, and the audience at the Leeds Playhouse was enthralled.

First up was *Walters*, Mithunbuzelli November's elegiac return to the world of his childhood in a parched South African township. Bouncing on pointe with bells round their ankles, a mother and grandmother preside benignly over a brood of boisterous children. Its sincerity verges on the mawkish, but the overall effect is not without charm.

Next came Shina Quagebeur's *Nostal-gia*, a harder-nosed venture into the knots of couples therapy. In snapshots, we are shown an emotionally battered heterosexual pair, mirrored by another similarly dressed pair representing either their younger selves, or what might have been or what is no more. Friends in green provide consolation and diversion, but there is no reconciliation; Abigail Prudames and Joseph Taylor, Northern Ballet's front-runners at present, made the couple's pain and uncertainties bitter and vivid.

But the sensation of the evening is *Ma Vie* by hip-hop choreographer Dickson Mbi. It's a riff off the idea of Casanova, a figure presented more conventionally in another work in Northern Ballet's current repertoire. Here we see him thwarted in his high-minded pursuit of an ineffable beauty, unobtainable in a giant white panted gown, and drawn into a daemonic ritual controlled by a grotesque priestly figure (the sexually ambiguous Jonathan Gould). As Roger Gould's maximalist music pounds repetitively like a belt-fed mortar, everyone on stage is drawn deeper

into an orgasmic danse macabre. It's exhilarating, frightening and hilarious: the dancers had a ball and I did too.

At the London Coliseum, an ad hoc company made up of Ukrainian dancers now sheltered in The Hague, presented Alexei Ratmansky's new production of *Giselle*. Ratmansky is a most thoughtful scholar of the 19th-century classics, and he has made some persuasive alterations to a choreographic text that has become encrusted with additions and corruptions since the ballet's premiere in 1841. Particularly helpful is his clarification of the exposure of Giselle's seducer Albrecht and his final reunion with his fiancée Bathilde. I only wish that the sequence mimed by Giselle's mother as she explains the curse of the Willis had been less mechanically delivered.

Sets (and costumes) had been borrowed from Birmingham Royal Ballet. Traditional in style bordering on the ropey, they didn't fit the Coliseum's large stage and there was no escaping an air of make-do and mend. Nor was the dancing all that it might have been in happier circumstances: the first act seemed altogether under-rehearsed, thanks to some rather stiff and joyless work from the corps and a routine account of the 'Peasant' pas de deux. Things improved considerably in the

It's exhilarating, frightening and hilarious: the dancers had a ball and I did too

second act, however, with Vladyslava Kovalenko leading the ghostly Willis with authority, and excellent playing of Adam's score by the orchestra of English National Opera under Viktor Olynyk.

Interest inevitably focused on Alina Cojocaru, a Romanian who trained in Kyiv before she arrived at the Royal Ballet School. Now in her early forties, she has lost something of the winsome naïveté that shone through her interpretation a decade ago and in the second act I felt something of her former ethical will-o'-the-wispiness had gone too. In its place comes more psychological nuance and a powerful sense of what it is to love, to be betrayed and to forgive.

Her Albrecht was Alexander Trusch, a Ukrainian based in Hamburg. He was most impressive, presenting the character as boyishly impetuous rather than a heartless bounder and dancing with beautifully clean lines and precision. He was strikingly good in the Nureyev gala at Drury Lane a couple of weeks ago too, so I hope we can see more of him soon.

It wasn't the most polished *Giselle* I've ever experienced and I suspect Cojocaru was a tad below her best. But bookended by the British and the Ukrainian national anthems, and with Ukrainian flags defiantly brandished during the curtain calls, it was certainly a uniquely stirring one.



Bella Ramsey as Lady Catherine

Cinema

Fine but forgettable Deborah Ross

Catherine Called Birdy

12A, Nationwide, and on Amazon Prime
from 7 October

Catherine Called Birdy is written and directed by Lena Dunham and it's a medieval comedy about a 14-year-old girl resisting her father's attempts to marry her off while yearning to do all the things women aren't allowed to do. (She would especially like to attend a hanging, for example. And also 'laugh very loud'.) It most put me in mind of *Monty Python and the Holy Grail*, as it has less brilliance, but it does not share that time-patience. It's fun, and endearing, and the patriarchy gets a good kicking which, as you know, is my favourite thing. But it feels like one joke or sketch that's been dragged out for nearly two hours. It's fine, yet forgettable so.

It stars Bella Ramsey, known from *Game of Thrones*, as Lady Catherine, who is also called Birdy as she keeps birds as pets. It's the 13th century and Catherine lives in 'the village of Stonebridge in the shire of Lincoln in the county of England' and has passions that include 'avoiding chores, critiquing my father's horrible swordplay and listening through doors I should not listen through'. We first make her acquaintance as she's participating in a mud fight with her friend, Perkin (Michael Woolfitt), the goat boy, and there is flatulence, not for the last time. It does have a terrific cast. Her nursemaid, Morwenna, is

It feels like one joke or sketch that's been dragged out for nearly two hours

played by (for some reason) a deeply Scottish Lesley Sharpe. Her father, Lord Rollo, is played by Andrew Scott, and Billie Piper is her mother, Lady Aislinn. Piper doesn't get to do much – Lady Aislinn is the most under-written character – but even Piper not doing much is better than no Piper at all. (I love Billie Piper. Top tip: if you've yet to do so, watch her TV series *I Hate Suzie*.)

Lord Rollo, meanwhile, has frittered away the family money and needs Catherine to marry someone rich. She has no choice in the matter. 'You are my only daughter. If I say so, you must marry me.' Catherine is to be married. Once more, I apologise. Alternatively, I could just be too old, too tired. Once more, I apologise.

There are some decent moments, such as when Lord Rollo, apologising to one suitor for Lady Catherine being in a grump, says 'Only the small pox? I laughed. But otherwise it's not surreal enough to be married to a girl who is a vile creature with a third ear on the back of her neck, and he's off. This scenario is repeated over and over, while she pines for her mother's younger brother, Uncle George (Joe Alwyn), which is weird. But, as she notes, he does have excellent teeth.

...NOTES ON...

Rarely spotted today in classrooms, the fountain pen was once a staple of every schoolboy's satchel. Pupils used to be marked down for scruffy handwriting. Stained fingers, inky shirtsleeves and blotted exercise books were considered a small price to pay for beautifully crafted calligraphy. The humble Biro, with its scratchy feel and unpredictable ink flow, was considered far inferior, even though it was less likely to leak. At my school, teachers would ridicule 'Biro-boys' whose parents were unable to afford more expensive Parker pens. Our English teacher took a dim view of those caught in possession of a Biro. He would order pupils found using one to write out 'I will not use Birus in class' 500 times... using a fountain pen, naturally.

ur new King isn't the only royal to have lost his rag over a leaky pen, as happened when he was signing a visitors' book at Hillsborough Castle near Belfast. 'Oh God, I hate this,' King Charles said, before handing the pen to his wife, Camilla, Queen Consort. 'I can't bear this bloody thing... every stinking time,' he added.

Tired of having to wash his hands after every warrant-signing session, the 10th-century Arab Egyptian ruler the Fatima caliph al-Mu'izz demanded his servants find him a writing utensil that wouldn't leak everywhere. Courtiers set to work and soon a revolutionary new pen appeared that held ink in a reservoir. It allowed him to write at any angle without fear of leakages.

There is plenty of evidence to suggest that Leonardo da Vinci constructed his own version of the fountain pen, which he used for technical drawing. It meant he could avoid the tedium of dipping traditional quills into ink. In the 17th century, fountain pens became widely available across Europe and by the 1880s, they had largely replaced quills, although quills continued to be used in royal circles. In 1962, Parker pens were awarded the Royal Warrant by Queen Elizabeth II and became the official supplier of writing instruments to the Royal Household.



- Green Roots
- Human Centric Lighting
- Terrariums & Kokedame
- Private Commissions



- Office Planting Schemes
- Living Green Walls
- Preserved Moss Walls
- Live Orchid Displays

BIOPH
DESIGNS

RECONNECTING YOUR OFFICE & HOME TO NATURE

DESIGNS

Advertise in *The Spectator* classified,

email max.cheshire@canopymedia.co.uk

SPEECH WRITING

SPEECH WRITING, RELAX,
 WE'LL WRITE IT FOR YOU!
 You're due to speak/present at a
 wedding/event. Don't worry - call
 Lawrence & team on 0207 118 1600
 or www.greatspeechwriting.com

HOSTWRITING

WANT TO WRITE YOUR LIFE STORY? Contact Marnie Summerfield Smith for your ghostwriting and editing needs. www.yourmemmori.co.uk
07851 548 522

DATING

OUTSTANDING CHRISTIAN

BOOKS

THINKING OF MOVING?

We buy mainly households or books; deceased's libraries. History, Art, Architecture, Travel, other subjects. Prompt payment; no commission or charges. ROTHWELL & DUNWORTH, Tel: 01398 323169, Email: rdbbooks.uk@gmail.com

www.spectator.co.uk/shop

SHOP

SPECTATOR

CLASSIFIEDS

Travel & Fine Watches

TRAVEL

TRAILFINDERS
THE TRAVEL EXPERTS

ALL YOUR ARRANGEMENTS IN ONE PLACE

FIND the answers to all your travel needs

Tailormade Travel Worldwide	020 7368 1440
First & Business Class Travel	020 7368 1441
Corporate Travel	020 7368 1499
Cruise Trailfinders	020 7368 1443
Private Touring Worldwide	020 7368 1442
Group Travel	020 7368 1453
Honeymoons & Wishlist	020 7368 1454
Travel Insurance – with Covid-19 cover	020 7408 9005



★ **Trustpilot** ★★★★★
"Truly excellent: patient, friendly, helpful & a mine of knowledge, tips and advice."

TRUST TRAILFINDERS

Book with confidence with
Trailfinders' Peace of Mind Policy.
Bespoke travel from the
most trusted name in travel.

NO ONE LOOKS AFTER YOU BETTER

trailfinders.com

FINE WATCHES

WE BUY WRISTWATCHES



PATEK PHILIPPE, ROLEX, AUDEMARS PIGUET, TUDOR, OMEGA

BEN WRIGHT VINTAGE WATCHES

Contact us on 07814 757742 or ben@benwrightvintagewatches.co.uk

CLASSIFIEDS

Auctions

AUCTIONS

AMATI
AUCTIONS

Instrument valuations
at home, taking place
across the UK

We specialise in violins, violas,
cellos & bows.

Please contact Elena to reserve
your appointment:

elena@amati.com | 020 7099 7114

Also at The Langham, London, W1B 1J

Monday 17th October
Sunday 30th October
Monday 31st October
Monday 14th November
Monday 12th December

www.amati.com

Image: A violin by G. B. Ceruti, Cremona, sold by Amati for £124,000 in 2019.



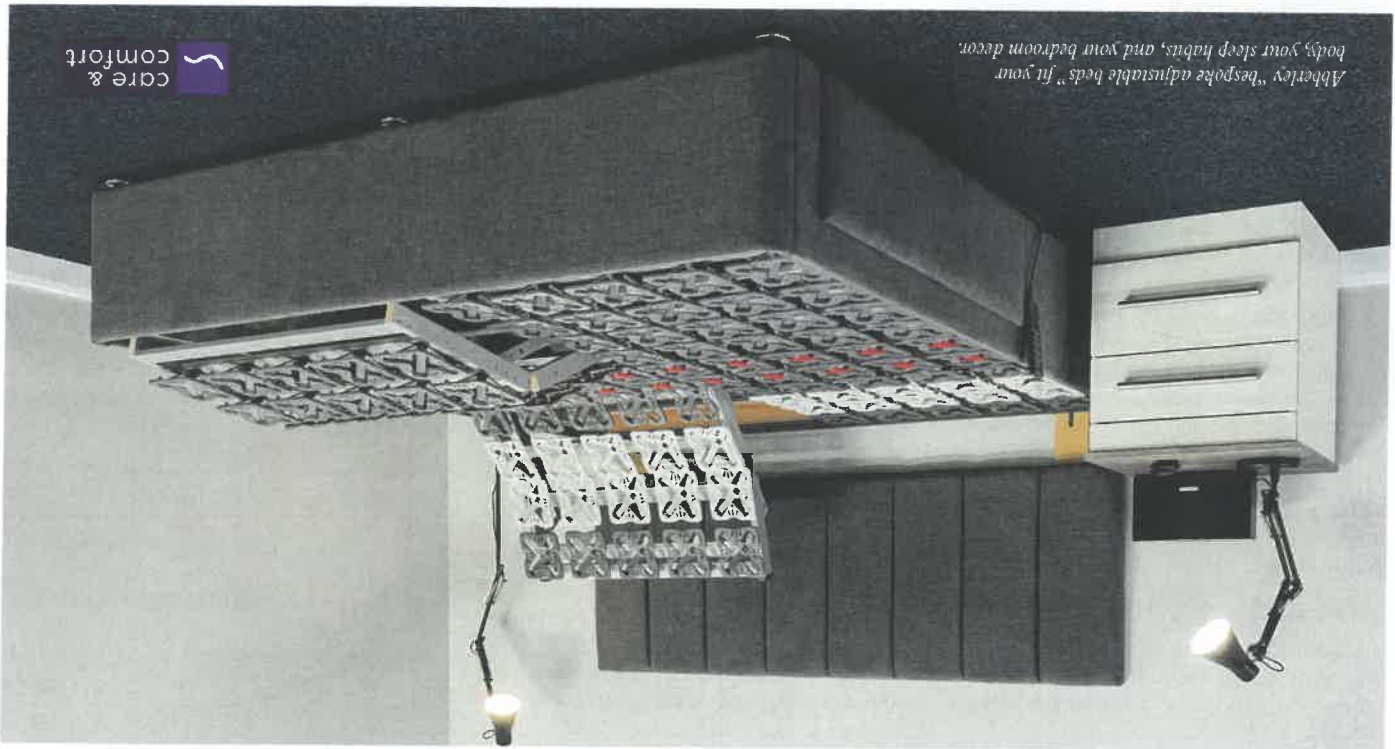
SPEC22/03

Amati powered by: **snoofa**

CLASSIFIEDS

Speciality Beds

SPECIALITY BEDS



care & comfort

Abbey "bespoke adjustable beds" fit your body, your sleep habits, and your bedroom decor.

Do you suffer from a condition that sometimes makes it difficult to sleep comfortably in your own bed?

Care & Comfort's Abbey "bespoke adjustable bed" is ideal for men and women age 50+ who have difficulty sleeping because of pain or discomfort. "There's simply no other adjustable bed like it," says a company spokesperson.

1. Abbey has a customisable 5-part "padded" frame that makes it easy to position the bed to fit the contour of your body for more restful sleep.
2. The push-button electric adjustable bed raises your legs, head, and neck to the ideal position for maximum comfort.
3. Care & Comfort can adjust the bed height, making it much easier to get into and out of the bed - even from a wheelchair.
4. Your Abbey mattress consists of 3 layers of foam for maximum support and comfort. The foam is open-celled, so air naturally passes through it, making the mattress cooler.
5. If you feel the mattress is too firm or too soft, we can send out a replacement layer. Layers can be easily swapped out to make your bed softer and plusher, or springier, bouncier, and firmer.
6. We also offer a "dual" adjustable bed, so you and your partner can each adjust your side to the desired position.
7. The Abbey bed's motor is nearly silent.

8. An easy-to-use wireless controller with memory can store your 3 favourite bed positions so you can properly contour your bed at the touch of a button—in seconds.
9. Care & Comfort is a family-owned business. Your Abbey bed and mattress are made right here in the U.K. in our factory - no cheap imports from China - and with no vacuum-packing to stress the foam.
10. In addition to superior comfort, Abbey is a very handsome bed that can be customised with a design, size, colour, fabric, and accessories to fit your décor - with 300 different colours to choose from.
11. Roomy, solid-wood drawers, supported from underneath by heavy-duty castors, hold a lot of weight and give you plenty of extra storage space.
12. Your Abbey adjustable bed is thoroughly tested in our factory to ensure it is in perfect working order before we deliver the

What to do next: Call Care & Comfort now - freephone 0800 080 3198 to order your bed, visit our showroom, or request our FREE Bespoke Adjustable Bed Information Kit and DVD.

Or visit us online at www.abbeybeds.co.uk today.

13. After delivery and assembly of your new Abbey adjustable bed, we remove and dispose of all boxes and packing materials. We can also disassemble, remove, and take away your old bed, if you wish.
14. The craftsmanship and quality of our beds should demand a high price -- but our company's small size and lower overhead allows us to make our premium beds eminently affordable.
15. If the bed is ever in need of service, we send you manufacturer's genuine replacement parts, which our service engineer can install for you.
16. You can try out an Abbey adjustable bed before you order one at our showroom located just 5 minutes from Southend airport.



LIFE

Every now and then, a loyal subject
shed tears freely and my husband
would croak out his cruel cry
— Dot Wordsworth, p62

High life

Taki



ones most opposed to privilege are those who have never succeeded in doing anything constructive or beneficial to others in their lives, and pass down nothing but grief, debt and very bad posture. The average person endeavours to better his or her life for their children — and, of course, for themselves — so who are these snide, preening blowhards of the *Bagel Times* to blame privilege for all of society's ills? I wouldn't be caught dead socialising with such people but I can tell you what they look like: funeral directors with piles.

And yet, the Savonarolas of today, the *New York Times*, the *Washington Post* and the American media in general, have decided that monarchy, aristocracy and inheritance are obsolete, and should be replaced by an underclass that prides itself in its ignorance, violence and illiteracy. Among the first to fall into line with this baloney about privilege are actors and TV pundits, both here in the UK and in the old colonies. These trained seals say things such as 'Privileged people have more access to good-quality nutrition...? Duh!

Low life

Jeremy Clarke



Unburdening one's sin of being privileged is the latest craze in the land of the mobile telephone has turned into an Oprah Winfrey, which brings me to Harry and Meghan. In the by now famous walkabout with the Prince and Princess of Wales outside Windsor Castle, I thought the Montecito duo looked like a football couple, all dolled up for a court appearance in a libel case. His suits are tight and look tighter because he swaggers like a footballer. She don't look so good no more at 41: the spindly ankles, the waist that has disappeared, the no longer cherubic countenance. Any reasonable person in possession of their senses should realise that zebras tend to change their stripes during the period of moulting, but revert to type afterwards.

Never mind. Harry has for some time now been a martinet, manipulate and exploited by anti-Brit and pro-work forces. Embittered obscure academics such as Uju Anya and others have finally had their day with the depraved insults they have directed towards the dead Queen. Just remember that if any one from the *New York Times* approaches you, The paper is one big lie, insufferably windy and dedicated to the overthrow of everything the average person believes in. It is anti-Christian, anti-family, anti-police, anti-armed forces, anti-law and order and anti-martinet, and on the side of everything criminal, sub-

Shock, horror! Back in 1789 gents were not supposed to do that, but my excuse is that she was rather cute. What I'd like to know is what about the poor women who are, or eventually will have to endure, sleeping with the creeps who are anti-Tom. Those types are known to suffer from hallitosis and be poorly endowed, and have absolutely no regard for what women want. My suggestion is that American ladies all become lesbians and get it over with. But let's get back to privilege, especially the white kind.

White privilege is not part of a broader neurosis, nor is it symptomatic of a larger cultural ailment of the past. It is a recent invention by lefty academics who use multiple colonial investigations in order to alleviate chronic constipation. According to the constipated ones, privilege today actually means discrimination and oppression, but the Greek equivalent of Dr Johnson, Professor Taki, writes otherwise. According to the Hellenic sage, privilege derives when somebody somewhere somehow accomplishes something others cannot, and his descendants benefit from what he did. The

We were four round the little table in the nunnery kitchen: a 90-year-old German lady and her man; a nun called Sister Mary of the Angels; and me. We had just come in from the early morning mass. The German lady's man was a Spaniard of about 35. It was impossible to tell but interesting to speculate on the nature of their relationship. Was he an unusually devoted carer? A manservant? A lover? The German lady was cross-examining me. She was deeply sceptical about a Protestant presence in the nunnery, about my being alone, about my claim to have advanced cancer, and she wanted answers.

She had a powerful, commanding personality but she was also quite deaf, slow to comprehend and easily confused. On account of these defects the cross-examination drew in the other two. She questioned me in English, then the nun and her man in Spanish. The nun asked supplementary questions in French. My clarifications were in French and English. The young Spaniard was monoglot and occupied himself with spreading marmalade on the German lady's packet toasts and serving her with coffee.

like Chekhov's dying bishop. The German transported, swaying unsteadily on my feet ting, standing and kneeling to the nuns' Later I attended Vespers in a stupor, sit- deeply asleep.

feet, beautiful faraway singing – then fell stream of urine, a flushing cistern, shuffling echoes – a shutting door, a tinkling bell, a took some drugs, listened to the cavernous made up the low single bed and lay on it, which was exactly what I'd hoped for. I and sink, an undecorated, spartan affair, For it was indeed, in spite of the wardrobe corridor at the end of which was my cell. She led me up stone staircases to a dark and His Boy.

At the moment she was enjoying *The Horse* that she was presently reading the *Chroni- cles of Narvia* – yes, in the original English. herself as Sister Mary of the Angels. Dis- covering that I was English, she confided bag and followed her inside the Babylonian card. Agog with admiration, I picked up my expedient of handing her a picture post- lady's runaway verbal train by the simple minutes, she adroitly derailed the German ly to the continuing monologue for a few I was greatly relieved when a nun- answered the door. After listening patient- Ible success.

at home. Which she did. And with incred- patiently educate him from first principles which was exactly what I'd hoped for

In spite of the wardrobe and sink, my cell was an undecorated, spartan affair, which was exactly what I'd hoped for

The first conversation I'd had with this elderly German lady was at the nunnery door before I'd even set foot inside for my three-day retreat. I'd rung the doorbell and was standing with my supermarket bag for life. The 17th-century nunnery is built into the side of a mountain on the scale of a region- ally important fortress. I guessed that even if a nun had set off as soon as she heard the bell, it might be a good five or ten minutes before she arrived. It was during this waiting period that the old lady came hobbling up, her young man silently following, and asked my nationality. After expressing surprise that I was English, she embarked on an intermi- nable biographical monologue about grow- ing up under the Nazis.

Her younger brother was simple-minded. They took him to their doctor, who was a Nazi. He diagnosed a faulty gene owing to miscegenation. Her father was Aryan, her mother Latino. The doctor wanted to put the lad into a home. But she well knew that that would be the end of her brother with what's his-name in power. 'Hitler?' I ventured. (It was the one word I got in edgeways.) She decided to make it her life's work to iron out her brother's mental wrinkles and to

And then there's this stable yard row, where the landowner evicted us for refusing to let the children in the neighbouring house, class of alcoholic.

I'm currently getting all kinds of flak for defending a 64-year-old former bricklayer in his efforts to attend support group meet- ings in Surrey where some members seem to be saying they don't want him because he has criminal convictions and they're a better class of alcoholic.

I never seem to get disputes one at a time. Troubles always come to me in mul- titudes. I fight at least two major battles on behalf of someone else or myself at any given time.

I slammed on my brakes, but instead of beeping my horn, I thought: 'Let it go, I can't be bothered. I just can't face one more argu- ment, ever again, with anyone.'

It was a winding country lane with blind bends and as I came round one, there was the cyclist, pedalling furiously along the lane on his hard right hand side.

The cyclist was on the wrong side of the road coming towards me head-on.



Real life
Melissa Kite

asleep again. of them. Grasping my invitation I wished five minutes' concentrated effort of all three and transcribing of a simple address took paper was eventually found. The dictation one from the depths of her habit. A scrap of I didn't have a pen. The nun produced and email.

And now here they were again at the breakfast table – this very old German lady and her young man. My answers to her searching questions had evidently been sat- isfactory because she said: 'You must visit us if you are ever in Madrid.' She stirred four jumps of sugar into her coffee and observed me cannily with her thorny old eyes. 'In case you were wondering, we have never made love, Paco and I. Never. It's not that kind of a relationship. Please come. Have you a pen? Let me give you my address and email.'

composition in a religious painting. their stalls and in their stillness were like a themselves comfortably and variously in an hour's silent adoration. The nuns disposed ing slackly off their faces. After Vespers came their element, their medical face masks hang- lady and her man were there and clearly in

So I stopped the car and allowed this man in his fifties to steer his bike back on to the correct side of the road. And as he went past around like I had flu.

He then blocked her number, because even he doesn't have the strength to argue would report her for fly-tipping.

He delivered all the pallets back and sent her an email warning her that if she dumped them again on the land we now rent we when push is coming to shove.

'That's not happening, don't worry,' said that were broken when we moved in there? months putting right all the broken fences to have you working for her for free for more?' I yelled at the builder b. 'She's going 'For goodness sake! I can't take any stable yard.

post and rail together when we took over the wooden pallets stacked up. They were the day to check the horses, we found a heap of pallets that had been holding sections of the

When we arrived at our new field the next given us back 'our pallets'.

The next text was unfathomable. She had it first thing tomorrow.

foot piece of cord she'd earlier asked to come out to be put back in, then he would do The BB replied that if she wanted a ten- save her gardeners from strimming it.

graze off a corridor by the sand school to ton, made a gap in it to allow the horses to paddock fence where we had, at her sugges- There was a piece of cord missing from a had arrived at the yard and was not happy.

he got the first text message from her. She Half an hour after he put the phone down, to fix it and she never did.

to trespass under the fence and get kicked and injured.

Instead of which we said it was no trou- ble at all, we had left the keys in the store room and we wished her well. The builder boyfriend, who took the call, thanked her politely for renting to us – even though she had completely breached our year and a half lease to turf us out after a few months and treat us abominably. We had worked for days to clear out all the temporary fencing we had installed because when we took the place on, her post and rail was smashed to bits, she promised to fix it or supply the wood for us

field down the road, the landowner did not turn up for the handing over of the keys.

She rang two hours later hysterical about her bad day. You want to have the day we're leaving, dear. I felt like saying. We've had to leave a stable yard with four horses because we won't allow the neighbours' children to trespass under the fence and get kicked and injured.

Like all Surrey disputes, the people involved are being thoroughly obnoxious. We cleared out of the yard this week and when all was empty and neat, the paddocks harrowed and the horses moved to a new field down the road, the landowner did not turn up for the handing over of the keys.

Like all Surrey disputes, the people involved are being thoroughly obnoxious. We cleared out of the yard this week and when all was empty and neat, the paddocks harrowed and the horses moved to a new field down the road, the landowner did not turn up for the handing over of the keys.

which she also owns, have unsupervised access to our horses.

Janet de Botton

Dealer East

When I was a boy, a python swallowed a German hippie camping near a lake on the Tanzanian border

Laikipia Plateau, Kenya

Our home county of Laikipia has its share of animal attack survivors. I know people who have been gored by buffalo, grabbed on the ankle by a crocodile, mauled by lion, and, the worst I ever saw, savaged by a hyena. A few years ago an elephant sadly killed our immediate neighbour. Tragically people do get killed, yet since records began in Kenya surprisingly few people have died at the hands of lion, elephant, buffalo, rhino, snakes, crocodile, hippo or bees. When I was a boy, a python completely swallowed a German hippie who was camping near a lake on the Tanzanian border. A buffalo used its rough tongue to lick the skin off a man's leg as he sat in a low thorn tree where he had taken refuge to get away from the charging bears – and buffalo have killed a number of people along with hippos that attack especially if you get in the way of their path back to water. I've known of three people killed by bull sharks up the Indian Ocean coast and so the other day when I saw a very large tiger shark

ate one of them and left the other alone. When the survivor arrived in court, the magistrate decided that since one suspect was already eaten, half of the evidence had vanished and

West	North	East	South
♠ 8 7	♠ 4	♠ 2	♠ 2
♥ K 2	♥ 8 5 3	♥ 8 5 3	♥ A K J 5 3
♦ Q 10 8 6 3	♦ Void	♦ Void	♦ K J 7 5 4 2
♣ K Q 9 7	♣ J 8 5 3 2	♣ J 8 5 3 2	♣ 10 4

W
N
S
E

West	North	East	South
♠ 8 7	♠ 4	♠ 2	♠ 2
♥ K 2	♥ 8 5 3	♥ 8 5 3	♥ A K J 5 3
♦ Q 10 8 6 3	♦ Void	♦ Void	♦ K J 7 5 4 2
♣ K Q 9 7	♣ J 8 5 3 2	♣ J 8 5 3 2	♣ 10 4



Well we had a cracking day out, thanks, and while I admit to a cranial foginess, I'm feeling pretty chipper overall and can declare our third annual *Spectator* Clays, Claret and Cognac Cruise (SCC&CC) a thundering success.

Forty readers joined us as we pooled along the Thames in the 100-year-old Thames Sailing Barge *Will*. We shot clays from the boat with pump action shotguns and blunderbusses, were entertained by business editor (and poet) Martin Vander Weyer, and relished that special camaraderie that exists between *Spectator* readers. We ate well, drank even better and happily screwed up London's rush-hour traffic as Tower Bridge opened specially for us. In short, we had a boot.

And so incredibly tasty were the bottles we enjoyed that I persuaded Laura Taylor of Private Cellar – also on board – to make them available to our wider readership. We started with Hampshire's sublime Hambleton Classic Cuvée Brut NV (1) from England's oldest commercial vineyard, founded in 1952 by that vinous visionary, Major-General Sir Guy Salisbury-Jones.

A blend of the three classic Champagne varieties, aged for three years, it's full of fresh citrus and apple with toasty brioche notes on the finish. It's a glorious fizz and no mistake, setting the tone for a perfect day on the river. £30.

The 2017 Domaine Chanson Mâcon-Villages (2), from an estate founded in 1750, followed. Quality has soared in the 25 years since the Bollinger family took control, and almost five years in bottle, the wine is soft, supple and lightly honeyed with plenty of citrus and creamy white stone fruit. Fine Burgundy is in short supply; grab some while you can. £16.95.

The 2018 Ch. Tayet Cuvée Prestige (3), the first of our three clarets from the De Schipper family – introduced by head winemaker Jean-Michel Garcion, celebrating 30 years with the company – is as fine a Bordeaux Supérieur as exists. Several of our shipmates knew it well, one explaining that he'd given up serving Grand Cru Classe claret to his constantly parched pals as Ch. Tayet invariably knocked their socks off just as successfully for a fraction of the price. An oak-aged, Merlot-based blend

from the Médoc, it's fresh and inviting with ripe bramble fruit, vanilla, cedarwood and spice. If you're looking for a scene-stealer at Christmas, then I beg you look no further. £14.75 down from £15.75.

From a stunning amphitheatre of vines, the 2016 Ch. Tour Baladoz (4) is a Saint-Émilion so fine that it was no surprise to hear

J-MG explain that the estate has just been promoted to Grand Cru Classe. Beautifully judged, it's full of rich cassis and plum notes, a hint of spice, touch of vanilla and silky smooth tannins. Crikey it's good! £28.95 down from £29.95.

The 2018 Ch. Haut-Breton Larigaudière (5), a Margaux Cru Bourgeois, is just as elegant. With 85 per cent Cabernet (rare in this

giant. With 85 per cent Cabernet (rare in this

giant. With 85 per cent Cabernet (rare in this

giant. With 85 per cent Cabernet (rare in this

giant. With 85 per cent Cabernet (rare in this

giant. With 85 per cent Cabernet (rare in this

giant. With 85 per cent Cabernet (rare in this

giant. With 85 per cent Cabernet (rare in this

giant. With 85 per cent Cabernet (rare in this

AOC), it's rich, dark and concentrated with of autumn leaves. So glossy and refined is it that it scooped Platinum at the 2020 *Decanter* World Wine Awards. £32 down from £33. Our SCC&CC being a *Spectator* rather than, say, a *New Statesman* event, we felt it sensible to serve our vino in magnums and double magnums. We like to think we know our audience. And although not officially in this offer, there are a few of these left and I've nabbed myself a couple of double mags. Mrs Ray will be furious, of course, having slapped a ban on me buying any more wine. But I'll get them delivered when she's out and stand my ground when the time comes. If you're interested, call Laura Taylor soon – she'll let you know what she has left. As always, delivery is free for case orders (sizes as marked) within mainland England and Wales.

ORDER FORM

Spectator Wine Offer

Private Cellar, 57 High Street, Wicken, Cambridgeshire CB7 5XR
Tel: 01353 721 999 Email: orders@privatecellar.co.uk

Prices in form are per case of 12 except where * indicates six

Red 3 2018 Ch. Tayet Cuvée Prestige, 14% £177.00

White 2 2017 Domaine Chanson Mâcon-Villages, 13% £203.40

Sparkling 1 *Hambleton Classic Cuvée Brut NV, 12% £180.00

5 *2018 Ch. Haut-Breton Larigaudière, 14% £192.00

4 *2016 Ch. Tour Baladoz, 14% £173.70

3 2018 Ch. Tayet Cuvée Prestige, 14% £177.00

2 2017 Domaine Chanson Mâcon-Villages, 13% £203.40

1 *Hambleton Classic Cuvée Brut NV, 12% £180.00

5 *2018 Ch. Haut-Breton Larigaudière, 14% £192.00

4 *2016 Ch. Tour Baladoz, 14% £173.70

3 2018 Ch. Tayet Cuvée Prestige, 14% £177.00

2 2017 Domaine Chanson Mâcon-Villages, 13% £203.40

1 *Hambleton Classic Cuvée Brut NV, 12% £180.00

5 *2018 Ch. Haut-Breton Larigaudière, 14% £192.00

4 *2016 Ch. Tour Baladoz, 14% £173.70

3 2018 Ch. Tayet Cuvée Prestige, 14% £177.00

2 2017 Domaine Chanson Mâcon-Villages, 13% £203.40

1 *Hambleton Classic Cuvée Brut NV, 12% £180.00

5 *2018 Ch. Haut-Breton Larigaudière, 14% £192.00

4 *2016 Ch. Tour Baladoz, 14% £173.70

3 2018 Ch. Tayet Cuvée Prestige, 14% £177.00

2 2017 Domaine Chanson Mâcon-Villages, 13% £203.40

1 *Hambleton Classic Cuvée Brut NV, 12% £180.00

5 *2018 Ch. Haut-Breton Larigaudière, 14% £192.00

4 *2016 Ch. Tour Baladoz, 14% £173.70

3 2018 Ch. Tayet Cuvée Prestige, 14% £177.00

2 2017 Domaine Chanson Mâcon-Villages, 13% £203.40

1 *Hambleton Classic Cuvée Brut NV, 12% £180.00

5 *2018 Ch. Haut-Breton Larigaudière, 14% £192.00

4 *2016 Ch. Tour Baladoz, 14% £173.70

3 2018 Ch. Tayet Cuvée Prestige, 14% £177.00

2 2017 Domaine Chanson Mâcon-Villages, 13% £203.40

1 *Hambleton Classic Cuvée Brut NV, 12% £180.00

5 *2018 Ch. Haut-Breton Larigaudière, 14% £192.00

4 *2016 Ch. Tour Baladoz, 14% £173.70

3 2018 Ch. Tayet Cuvée Prestige, 14% £177.00

2 2017 Domaine Chanson Mâcon-Villages, 13% £203.40

1 *Hambleton Classic Cuvée Brut NV, 12% £180.00

5 *2018 Ch. Haut-Breton Larigaudière, 14% £192.00

4 *2016 Ch. Tour Baladoz, 14% £173.70

3 2018 Ch. Tayet Cuvée Prestige, 14% £177.00

2 2017 Domaine Chanson Mâcon-Villages, 13% £203.40

1 *Hambleton Classic Cuvée Brut NV, 12% £180.00

5 *2018 Ch. Haut-Breton Larigaudière, 14% £192.00

4 *2016 Ch. Tour Baladoz, 14% £173.70

3 2018 Ch. Tayet Cuvée Prestige, 14% £177.00

2 2017 Domaine Chanson Mâcon-Villages, 13% £203.40

1 *Hambleton Classic Cuvée Brut NV, 12% £180.00

5 *2018 Ch. Haut-Breton Larigaudière, 14% £192.00

4 *2016 Ch. Tour Baladoz, 14% £173.70

3 2018 Ch. Tayet Cuvée Prestige, 14% £177.00

2 2017 Domaine Chanson Mâcon-Villages, 13% £203.40

1 *Hambleton Classic Cuvée Brut NV, 12% £180.00

5 *2018 Ch. Haut-Breton Larigaudière, 14% £192.00

4 *2016 Ch. Tour Baladoz, 14% £173.70

3 2018 Ch. Tayet Cuvée Prestige, 14% £177.00

2 2017 Domaine Chanson Mâcon-Villages, 13% £203.40

1 *Hambleton Classic Cuvée Brut NV, 12% £180.00

5 *2018 Ch. Haut-Breton Larigaudière, 14% £192.00

4 *2016 Ch. Tour Baladoz, 14% £173.70

3 2018 Ch. Tayet Cuvée Prestige, 14% £177.00

2 2017 Domaine Chanson Mâcon-Villages, 13% £203.40

1 *Hambleton Classic Cuvée Brut NV, 12% £180.00

5 *2018 Ch. Haut-Breton Larigaudière, 14% £192.00

4 *2016 Ch. Tour Baladoz, 14% £173.70

3 2018 Ch. Tayet Cuvée Prestige, 14% £177.00

2 2017 Domaine Chanson Mâcon-Villages, 13% £203.40

1 *Hambleton Classic Cuvée Brut NV, 12% £180.00

5 *2018 Ch. Haut-Breton Larigaudière, 14% £192.00

4 *2016 Ch. Tour Baladoz, 14% £173.70

3 2018 Ch. Tayet Cuvée Prestige, 14% £177.00

2 2017 Domaine Chanson Mâcon-Villages, 13% £203.40

1 *Hambleton Classic Cuvée Brut NV, 12% £180.00

5 *2018 Ch. Haut-Breton Larigaudière, 14% £192.00

4 *2016 Ch. Tour Baladoz, 14% £173.70

3 2018 Ch. Tayet Cuvée Prestige, 14% £177.00

2 2017 Domaine Chanson Mâcon-Villages, 13% £203.40

1 *Hambleton Classic Cuvée Brut NV, 12% £180.00

5 *2018 Ch. Haut-Breton Larigaudière, 14% £192.00

4 *2016 Ch. Tour Baladoz, 14% £173.70

3 2018 Ch. Tayet Cuvée Prestige, 14% £177.00

2 2017 Domaine Chanson Mâcon-Villages, 13% £203.40

1 *Hambleton Classic Cuvée Brut NV, 12% £180.00

5 *2018 Ch. Haut-Breton Larigaudière, 14% £192.00

4 *2016 Ch. Tour Baladoz, 14% £173.70

3 2018 Ch. Tayet Cuvée Prestige, 14% £177.00

2 2017 Domaine Chanson Mâcon-Villages, 13% £203.40

1 *Hambleton Classic Cuvée Brut NV, 12% £180.00

5 *2018 Ch. Haut-Breton Larigaudière, 14% £192.00

4 *2016 Ch. Tour Baladoz, 14% £173.70

3 2018 Ch. Tayet Cuvée Prestige, 14% £177.00

2 2017 Domaine Chanson Mâcon-Villages, 13% £203.40

1 *Hambleton Classic Cuvée Brut NV, 12% £180.00

5 *2018 Ch. Haut-Breton Larigaudière, 14% £192.00

4 *2016 Ch. Tour Baladoz, 14% £173.70

3 2018 Ch. Tayet Cuvée Prestige, 14% £177.00

2 2017 Domaine Chanson Mâcon-Villages, 13% £203.40

1 *Hambleton Classic Cuvée Brut NV, 12% £180.00

5 *2018 Ch. Haut-Breton Larigaudière, 14% £192.00

4 *2016 Ch. Tour Baladoz, 14% £173.70

3 2018 Ch. Tayet Cuvée Prestige, 14% £177.00

2 2017 Domaine Chanson Mâcon-Villages, 13% £203.40

1 *Hambleton Classic Cuvée Brut NV, 12% £180.00

5 *2018 Ch. Haut-Breton Larigaudière, 14% £192.00

4 *2016 Ch. Tour Baladoz, 14% £173.70

3 2018 Ch. Tayet Cuvée Prestige, 14% £177.00

2 2017 Domaine Chanson Mâcon-Villages, 13% £203.40

1 *Hambleton Classic Cuvée Brut NV, 12% £180.00

5 *2018 Ch. Haut-Breton Larigaudière, 14% £192.00

4 *2016 Ch. Tour Baladoz, 14% £173.70

3 2018 Ch. Tayet Cuvée Prestige, 14% £177.00

2 2017 Domaine Chanson Mâcon-Villages, 13% £203.40

1 *Hambleton Classic Cuvée Brut NV, 12% £180.00

5 *2018 Ch. Haut-Breton Larigaudière, 14% £192.00

4 *2016 Ch. Tour Baladoz, 14% £173.70

3 2018 Ch. Tayet Cuvée Prestige, 14% £177.00

2 2017 Domaine Chanson Mâcon-Villages, 13% £203.40

1 *Hambleton Classic Cuvée Brut NV, 12% £180.00

5 *2018 Ch. Haut-Breton Larigaudière, 14% £192.00

4 *2016 Ch. Tour Baladoz, 14% £173.70

3 2018 Ch. Tayet Cuvée Prestige, 14% £177.00

2 2017 Domaine Chanson Mâcon-Villages, 13% £203.40

1 *Hambleton Classic Cuvée Brut NV, 12% £180.00

5 *2018 Ch. Haut-Breton Larigaudière, 14% £192.00

4 *2016 Ch. Tour Baladoz, 14% £173.70

3 2018 Ch. Tayet Cuvée Prestige, 14% £177.00

2 2017 Domaine Chanson Mâcon-Villages, 13% £203.40

1 *Hambleton Classic Cuvée Brut NV, 12% £180.00

5 *2018 Ch. Haut-Breton Larigaudière, 14% £192.00

4 *2016 Ch. Tour Baladoz, 14% £173.70

3 2018 Ch. Tayet Cuvée Prestige, 14% £177.00

2 2017 Domaine Chanson Mâcon-Villages, 13% £203.40

1 *Hambleton Classic Cuvée Brut NV, 12% £180.00

5 *2018 Ch. Haut-Breton Larigaudière, 14% £192.00

4 *2016 Ch. Tour Baladoz, 14% £173.70

3 2018 Ch. Tayet Cuvée Prestige, 14% £177.00

2 2017 Domaine Chanson Mâcon-Villages, 13% £203.40

1 *Hambleton Classic Cuvée Brut NV, 12% £180.00

5 *2018 Ch. Haut-Breton Larigaudière, 14% £192.00

4 *2016 Ch. Tour Baladoz, 14% £173.70

3 2018 Ch. Tayet Cuvée Prestige, 14% £177.00

2 2017 Domaine Chanson Mâcon-Villages, 13% £203.40

1 *Hambleton Classic Cuvée Brut NV, 12% £180.00

5 *2018 Ch. Haut-Breton Larigaudière, 14% £192.00

4 *2016 Ch. Tour Baladoz, 14% £173.70

3 2018 Ch. Tayet Cuvée Prestige, 14% £177.00

2 2017 Domaine Chanson Mâcon-Villages, 13% £203.40

1 *Hambleton Classic Cuvée Brut NV, 12% £180.00

5 *2018 Ch. Haut-Breton Larigaudière, 14% £192.00

4 *2016 Ch. Tour Baladoz, 14% £173.70

3 2018 Ch. Tayet Cuvée Prestige, 14% £177.00

2 2017 Domaine Chanson Mâcon-Villages, 13% £203.40

1 *Hambleton Classic Cuvée Brut NV, 12% £180.00

5 *2018 Ch. Haut-Breton Larigaudière, 14% £192.00

4 *2016 Ch. Tour Baladoz, 14% £173.70

3 2018 Ch. Tayet Cuvée Prestige, 14% £177.00

2 2017 Domaine Chanson Mâcon-Villages, 13% £203.40

1 *Hambleton Classic Cuvée Brut NV, 12% £180.00

5 *2018 Ch. Haut-Breton Larigaudière, 14% £192.00

4 *2016 Ch. Tour Baladoz, 14% £173.70

3 2018 Ch. Tayet Cuvée Prestige, 14% £177.00

2 2017 Domaine Chanson Mâcon-Villages, 13% £203.40

1 *Hambleton Classic Cuvée Brut NV, 12% £180.00

5 *2018 Ch. Haut-Breton Larigaudière, 14% £192.00

No sacred cows

Cancelled again – the story of my life
Toby Young

I thought one of the benefits of being cancelled – I lost five positions in quick succession at the beginning of 2018 – is that it immunises you from being cancelled again. After all, what more dirt could be thrown at me? The offence archaeologists did such a thorough job four years ago, sifting through everything I'd said or written dating back to 1987, that there was nothing left to dig up. But it turns out that was naive. Last week I got cancelled again.

The instrument of my downfall was PayPal, the technology company that supports online money transfers and operates as a payment processor for online businesses, auction sites and so on. At around 2 p.m. last Thursday I received an email from PayPal informing me that the company was 'initiating closure' of my personal account because I was 'in violation' of its 'Acceptable Use Policy'. I looked up that policy and it covers a multitude of sins, but no clue was offered as to which one I'd committed. 'If you have money in your PayPal balance, we'll hold it for up to 180 days,' it said. That was a bit annoying because I have over £600 in the account, but it wasn't the end of the world. I mainly use it for receiving payments from European magazines. I write for occasionally.

Then it got serious. Within a few minutes of contacting me, PayPal

I had no idea PayPal could just whisk the rug out from under you with no notice



sent the same message to the Daily Sceptic, the news publishing website I've been running for two-and-a-half years, and the Free Speech Union, the organisation I set up in 2020 to defend people threatened with cancellation. In both cases, PayPal was shutting down the accounts for the same reason – breaching the Acceptable Use Policy. No further details. To give you a sense of how serious this is, about a quarter of the Daily Sceptic's donor revenue is processed by PayPal and about a third of the Free Speech Union's 9,500 members pay their dues via PayPal.

'So what?' you might think. Just email all those people and advise them to use a different payment processor. I'll do that, obviously, but it's inevitable that some won't both-er – some of them won't even open the emails – and the resulting loss of revenue will be hugely disruptive. The Daily Sceptic has four people on the payroll and the Free Speech Union has 15 and they both operate on tight margins. I was relying on PayPal to deliver the service it promised to perform when I first signed up and which I've been paying for until now (1.5 per cent commission on every transaction). I had no idea it could just whisk the rug out from under you, with no notice and without having to provide any proper explanation. In my case, the excuse offered was obviously bogus. How could all three accounts be guilty of 'violating' the same policy within minutes of each other?

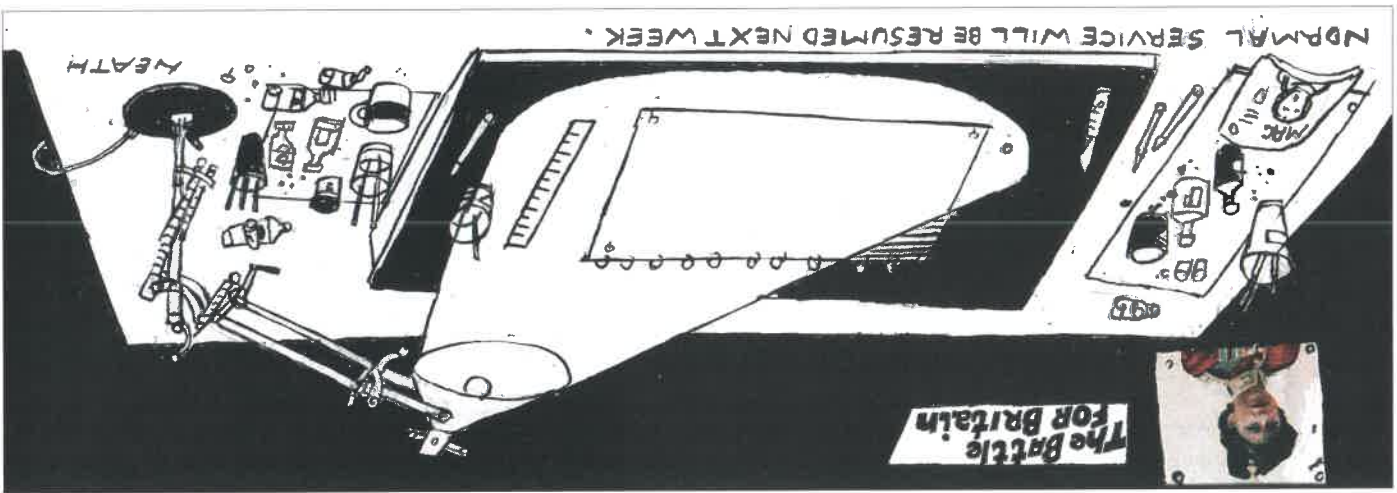
I tried appealing to customer services and got nowhere. I wrote to Vincent Bellon, the vice president of PayPal UK, and didn't get a reply. I contacted the 'corporate communica-

tions team' in New York and London, telling them I was planning to write about what had happened and asking for a comment. Nothing. As so often when dealing with these Silicon Valley behemoths, it's impossible to hold them to account. There is no redress if they decide to terminate your account. So why has PayPal cancelled me? I can only guess, but I suspect it's because someone at the company isn't very keen on free speech. I did some googling and discovered that PayPal and about a third of the Free Speech Union's 9,500 members pay their dues via PayPal.

had their accounts closed by PayPal recently, particularly on the three issues you're not allowed to be sceptical about: the lockdown policy and other Covid restrictions, the mRNA vaccines, and the 'climate emergency'. The Daily Sceptic frequently publishes articles on those subjects and the Free Speech Union may have fallen foul of another taboo – defending people who've got into trouble with HR departments for refusing to declare their gender pronouns. PayPal, like most Big Tech companies, has sided with the trans-rights activists on that issue. A journalist called Colin Wright, an ex-academic with a PhD in biology and an outspoken critic of the view that sex is a social construct, lost his account in June.

I expect the Daily Sceptic and the Free Speech Union will survive this attempt to demonise them, but it's left me wanting to do something about this insidious new way of cancelling people. As the switch to a cashless society gathers speed, we need to put some laws in place to protect people from being punished by companies like PayPal for saying something their employees disapprove of.

MICHAEL HEATH



Sport

The big beast from the far north

Roger Alton



Don't bother watching those gazillion-dollar TV prequels to *The Lord of the Rings* or *Game of Thrones*. Who needs gratuitous nudity, multiple dragons and surprise beheadings when the real Nordic legend is bang in front of us, his mighty frame squeezed into the light blue of Manchester City and devouring the grass of the Etihad? (Though not literally, yet.) He is an outlandish-looking creature from the far north, clearly designed by some dotty scientist, faster, bigger, stronger and more ruthless than anyone else in football and effortlessly leaping higher too.

Quick to smile, often at awkward moments, he moves effortlessly with that curious stiff-armed gait as he outruns everyone else on the pitch. He is more or less the perfect creation apart from a tiny bug in some computer's language programme that means his English is slightly awkward, a bit otherworldly, unlike most Norwegians who speak English better than you or me. And his manners can be too good: the other day he was filmed nearly rolling up his training top and

A deadly weapon delivered to the richest club with the best players and the most gifted coach in the world

handing it to the kit man, rather than just chucking it on the ground as all the other City players did.

Erling Haaland is like nobody else in football, and now he has stitched up the English Premier League: a deadly weapon safely delivered to the richest club with the best players and the most gifted coach in the world. Is there any limit to what he can do?

It's a pity we won't see him in Qatar but he'll have had a month's rest when the season resumes, so he could be even more terrifying than he is now. Who would bet against 40 goals this season, especially when many opposing defenders will be exhausted after World Cup duty? Are 50 goals out of the question?

Meanwhile, in an underground lab somewhere north of Tromsø, deep in the Arctic Circle, a wild-haired scientist is clutching his head as he contemplates the bent bars and ripped restraints in his underground lab, and thinking: 'My god, what have I done?'

The great rugby writer and broadcaster Eddie Butler was only 65 when he died suddenly last week on a charity trek in Peru. It was one of the privileges of my life to have worked with Eddie on the *Observer*. He was a true giant in every sense, funny, wise, tireless and devoid of any arrogance. He loved his journalism and always wanted to entertain as well as tell the truth. A brilliant commentator, with

DEAR MARY YOUR PROBLEMS SOLVED



itself, your husband has an urge/frequency problem, which could be tackled with bladder training and possibly some quite effective medication. For the purposes of his night out, I would recommend a product readily available in chemists called Tena Men Premium Fit Level 4 Pads. They come in packs of ten for around £8.25, and are essentially pull-up disposable pants with excellent super-absorbent padding. They are not too bulky, so wouldn't be noticeable under his suit.

Q. My boyfriend and I are shortly to stay with old friends of his. I hear that while the husband is a known sweetie, the wife is very competitive with other women and likes to lead wild swimming parties to a river on their estate where

there is no jetty. This is so she can show off how athletic she is, while her novice female guests are shown at a disadvantage as they scrabble and slither on the riverbank trying to get in or out. My boyfriend doesn't want me to be a killjoy by not swimming. —A.H., Bath

A. Order a (2.8m when extended) steel ladder from Argos (£55). Have this delivered to the friends before your visit, and when you arrive your boyfriend can chuckle that, having seen one at another riparian property, he thought it would make a marvellously original present as it can remain on the riverbank as a permanent fixture.

Q. On a visit to Gynydebourne recently, I was astonished to see a well-dressed member of the

audience plucking pears from one of the carefully tended trees in the garden. He was clearly not a member of the Christie family. Should I have confronted him? If so, given that the atmosphere on these occasions is lighthearted and celebratory, what should I have said without spoiling his evening — or mine? —C.M.Y., London

A. You might have solved the mystery by acting daff, approaching with friendly demeanour and widened childish eyes. Excuse me, but can we all help ourselves? Is it all-inclusive in Gynydebourne? The pear-plucker would have been forced to reply either that he helped himself only because he was a guest of the Christies (possible) or that he had to admit he had stolen them.

The Saudis are continuing to splash the cash on their LIV golf tour. The sport Smith will need to protect itself: Cameron Smith won the last LIV event, but I doubt many people know or care where it was or who he beat (Chicago and Dustin Johnson). He did manage to pick up £3.5 million, which is nice work for three days. The Saudis clearly mean business: just look at Newcastle United's new change strip: white shirt with green trim, green shorts. Compare it to Saudi Arabia's soccer strip: white shirt with green trim, green shorts. And that's unlikely to be because they can't afford a new kit designer.

So golf has to be careful if it isn't to be ripped apart. The US PGA and the DP World Tour are vital: they need to work together, as do the majors and the ranking system. If they stay aligned, LIV will wither. But golf too needs to adapt a bit. Maybe 72-hole tournaments should be like five sets in tennis — for the really big events, the majors, the world golf championship and the like — while 54 holes with a cut at 36 might make more sense for regular tour events, which often fail to pull in many spectators.

Food

Italian underworld

Tanya Gold

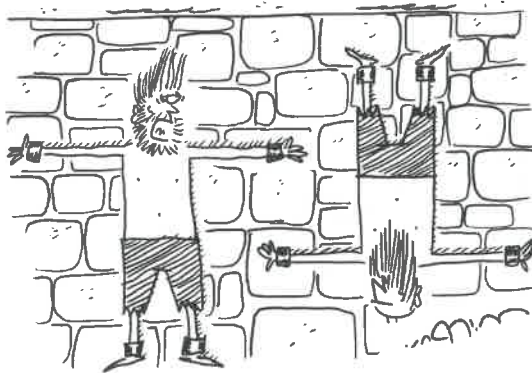


long, low salon of all Sally Bowles's dreams. I am sorry to bang on about Weimar, but that is where restaurant design is. I didn't know it cared so much about the fragility of liberal democracy, but cushions can say a lot if you listen to them. So can chairs, and righteously. The chairs in the anteroom to the loo are by House of Hackney, and I covet them, and if I thought I could have got away with it, I would have stolen one.

Bardo is all beautiful: red velvet chairs, white tablecloths, a greenish Art Deco bar, a bandstand, a piano, the dimmest of lights. Money and faint depravity circulate like air. At dusk, though – I eat early, primarily – it is almost empty, which is how I like a nightclub that is also, incidentally, an Italian restaurant: full of expectation. (Its owner, Luca Maggiora, began in nightclubs, and you can tell.) It is quite sinister wine cellar. This whole restaurant is a cellar, so this is a cellar within a cellar, and the wine closes in.

I think Bardo is the restaurant Park Row, the ludicrous Batman-themed restaurant in Soho, wants to be: it's easier to be an authentic underworld if you don't call it by that name. Above all, it feels ephemeral, as if I could return tomorrow and find it all gone, and replaced by an office or a car park or, more likely, nothing, not even a memory. If I am paraphrasing *American Psycho*, it wasn't conscious, at least initially. I would say the *Spectator* reader would like Bardo, but go early, as I did, before your glass coach turns to ash.

Bardo St James's, 4 Suffolk Place, London SW1Y 4HX; 020 3828 2487.



'I ventured to suggest that there was something a little bit archaic about the whole institution.'

Money
and faint
depravity
circulate
like air

Bardo St James's Restaurant – a name which reads like a map – is a vast new Italian restaurant in one of the pale imperial palaces off Trafalgar Square, near Pall Mall and *The Phantom of the Opera*, which goes on because snobbery and sado-masochism are among the many things that never die. You might think Bardo (I am not typing all that again) would fold down and fold up in a night, like Cinderella's coach – it feels flimsy – but these restaurant it feels flimsy – but these restaurant palaces by Pall Mall are surprisingly robust. The last time I ate in this district it was at the Imperial Treasure, a gloomy and magnificent Chinese restaurant where a performative duck was £100. I thought it wouldn't last – it was just us, the waiting staff and the duck – but it did.

The entrance to Bardo is a lift to the basement, and beyond the lift is a closed red velvet curtain, which you have to fight with to gain entry. I like this. Beyond that are charming women – I haven't met a rude waiter in London for many years – and the

MIND YOUR LANGUAGE

Well up



'We got a gusher!' exclaimed my husband in his idea of the accent of a Texan oil prospector. Normally, I'm not ashamed of his derailed behaviour, but now it seemed wrong. For we were watching the hypnotic livestream from Westminster Hall of people paying their respects at Queen Elizabeth's coffin.

There was many a tear in the eye, but the convention was not to blub openly. Every now and then, a loyal subject shed tears freely and my husband would croak out his cruel cry.

Almost as annoying as his

St Paul's, one broadsheet had the headline: 'Congregation well up as choir sing.' Undereath, the report said: 'Members of the congregation were tearful through the service as the choir sang. One woman was seen using a handkerchief to wipe her eyes. There you go, then. I suppose I don't like the idea of a person welling up. Tears have long welled up. Chaucer has someone's heart becoming less swollen through tears 'that gommen up to wellle'. For centuries, water, smoke, blood and lava welled up. But a person

welling up is not recorded before 1889, of all places in a translation of Achilles Tatius, a Greek novelist from Alexandria in the 2nd century after Christ. How foreigners cope with *well up*, I can't imagine. In, 'He has been doing well up to now,' it has a completely different sense from, 'He was well up in local history,' let alone, 'We are well up for the football challenge.' Mastering it is well hard. But now I find that that is a brand of herbal vitility tablets. Well!

— *Dot Wordsworth*

Own a cartoon masterpiece

Telegraph prints

With quick wit and acerbic humour, Telegraph cartoon prints show the lighter side of today's biggest issues. They're the perfect gift for anyone, especially yourself.

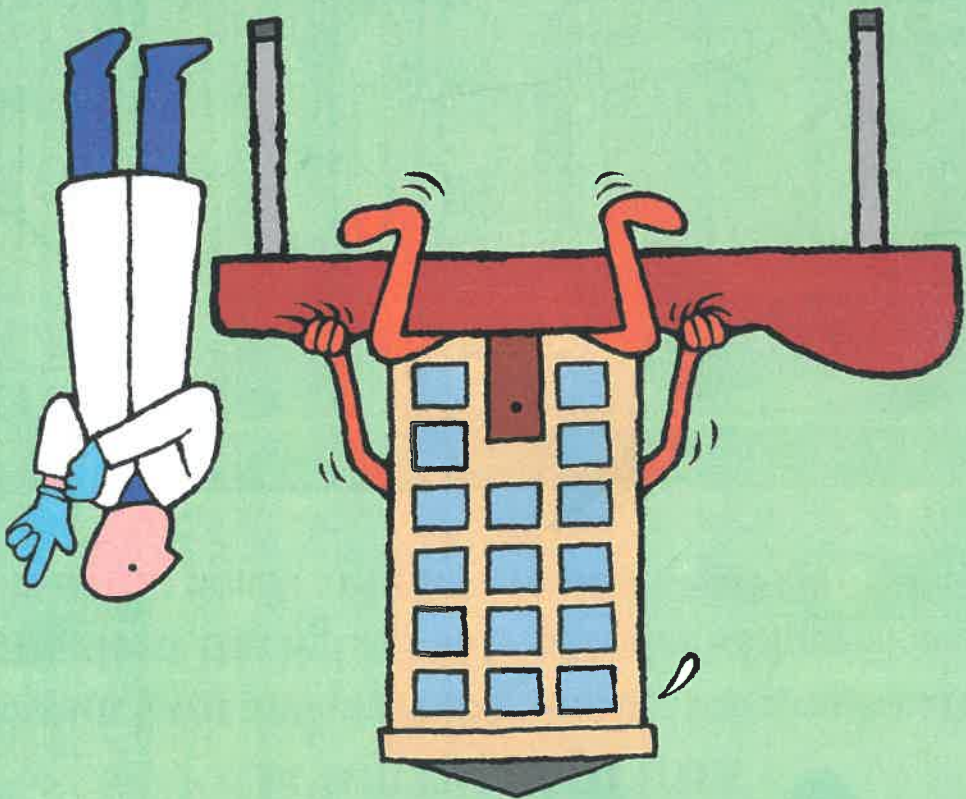


ORDER TODAY

Visit telegraph.co.uk/blowerprints
or call 0191 603 0178

20% discount for Telegraph subscribers

Before we invest in
a Smaller Company
we give it an in-depth
examination.



To truly understand a Smaller Company you need to examine more than just its bottom line. You need to get beneath the skin to ensure it truly is as healthy as it looks. Check its business model is resilient enough to withstand the pressures of a fast-changing world. That it has sustainability values at its heart. But above all, to check that its management have what it takes to continue to prosper when the going gets tough. And to do that, you have to get up close – and personal.

No one knows Smaller Companies like we do

MONTANARO

Speak to an adviser or visit montanaro.co.uk/discover

Issued by Montanaro Asset Management Ltd, authorised and regulated in the UK by the FCA (FRN: 183211), with its registered address at 53 Threadneedle Street, London, EC2R 8AR. Capital is at risk. Past performance is not an indicator of future performance. The value of investments may go down as well as up.